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Miss Johnes -
from the author
Nov. 1876 -

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from the author
Dec. 1876 —

THE
CHIEFTAIN'S DAUGHTER.

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THE

CHIEFTAIN'S DAUGHTER,

A

LEGEND OF SYBIL HEAD,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

EDWARD HENEAGE DERING.

Author of "Grey's Court" and "Florence Danby."

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THE CHIEFTAIN'S DAUGHTER.

THE CHIEFTAIN'S DAUGHTER.

On Galway's coast, in days of yore,
There lived a chieftain bold,
Who honoured all scholastic lore,
And ne'er his plighted word forswore,
Nor largesse did withhold.

The pilgrim and the knightly guest,
The orphan and the poor,
His bounty and his worth confessed,
And far away his name was blessed
By wandering troubadour.

His castle-walls so broad and deep
Now moulder in decay,
And postern gate and donjeon keep
Give shelter to the mountain sheep,
Or shade on summer's day.

But peasant-minds his story hold
By oral heritage;
And on the spot a tale was told,
Which now I purpose to unfold
To those who'll read my page.

CANTO I.

I.

Knights of valour, panoplied in steel,
Rein their steeds before the castle-gate,
Herald-trumpets blow full many a peal,
Herald-tongues the names enunciate.
Men look forth in crowds from court and tower,
Minstrels tune their harps within the Hall,
Maidens lightly blush in lady's bower,
Mirthful groups are on the turret-wall;
Grave and careful stands the ancient seneschal.

What is it now bestirs the country round?
What is it now bestirs the knights renowned?
What is it now bestirs the tilting ground?
It is that Roderick Lynch, the potent lord,
Hath rashly pledged his word he will afford
A peerless prize for knightly lance and sword—

His daughter's hand—and this his fixed intent
Produces much discourse and more astonishment.

For wise and thoughtful is he known to be;
He never acted rashly until now:
What means this proud delusion—this decree
Of careless and uncertain tyranny,
That chains his purpose by an evil vow?
There is this proud delusion in his mind,
There is this evil pledge that chains him down
Below the level of his fair renown;
And yet he grieves for what himself designed—
Oh, foolish human heart, unequally inclined!

Unequal and unblest in its inclining,
Moved by a double force of love and pride,
The chieftain's heart ignores its own declining:
Evil and good within it coincide.
He loves his daughter, and is proud of fame,
His love and pride unite in vanity,
He craves fresh lustre for his honoured name,

And seeks that lustre in a marriage tie,
Nor doubts its own intent. Oh, poor humanity!

He loves his daughter and is proud of fame,
So, being self-deceived, he doth proclaim
His purpose, that whichever belted knight
Shall fairly vanquish five compeers in fight
Shall win the beauteous Sybil by that deed,
And of his valour shall receive the meed.
Thus saith the chief, and in this full intent,
Makes ready for tomorrow's tournament,
Producing much discourse and some astonishment.

His heart ignores its error, being proud;
And pride admits no rival; so at length
When strange misgivings beard him in his strength,
They may not enter—they are disallowed
Pride disallows them, yet may not withstand,
For pride unsettled hath but small defence,
And, like to potent phrases writ on sand,

It only blinds in part, and gives offence.
His heart ignores the sin, yet feels its consequence—

Which in these words may briefly be detailed:—
Uneasiness by anger thinly veiled,
Repentance changing quick to irritation,
Sickly remorse and fierce equivocation,
Lines on his brow and sternness in his face,
Sullen avoidance of his child's embrace.
Such are the signs which day by day augment,
Producing much discourse and more astonishment.

II.

Brightest gem in deepest mine,
Virgin heart most feminine;
Infant soul and mind of sage,
Hopes of youth, and thoughts of age,
Written on an open page,

Passion in a vestal veil,
Woman's nature in detail,
Biding till another heart prevail:—
Such, oh! Sybil, beauteous child,
Fair creation undefiled,
Such are attributes of thine,
Undeveloped heroine.
May those gifts from Heaven sent,
Have their true development!
Shielded be thy heart from blight and blandishment!
Feel'st thou no alarm—
Fearest thou no harm—
Virgin heart so capable and warm?
Gazing on the wave-dipp'd sun,
Think that ere its course be run
To-morrow thou'lt be lost and won?
Though thy heart is now so free
Canst thou bear the stern decree
In its stern reality?

Vague, unknown and unconfest,
Love doth slumber in thy breast:
What if it awake in pain,
Fettered by a galling chain?
What, if it awake to see
Visions of past ecstasy—
Visions past ere throughly felt,
Hopes that in formation melt?
What if it awake with sudden start
To recognize the o'er-prevailing heart,
And see the phantom form of happiness depart?

Rising from her bed, the maiden
Hath no thought of peril nigh,
Though the morn with peril laden
Breaks along the eastern sky.

Rising lightly in her beauty,
Like the roseate morning dew,
Calmly she contemplates duty;
Life is still so fresh and new.

Backward roll her balmy slumbers,
Like a mist at dawn of day;
Not one fond regret encumbers
Thought of her's this trial-day.

Dark-eyed maidens as they tend her,
Blush, half conscious of delight,
Yet, though passion woes impend her,
Sybil's face is calmly bright.

Daydreams struggling in subjection,
Pass through them from passion nigh,
Flitting on through quick perception,
Like sheet lightning through the sky.

Flash of storm, o'er earth impending,
Bides unformed behind the cloud;
Love, o'er Sybil's heart extending,
Is not yet by her avowed.

Soon shall love's electric power
Show her heart what's now concealed:
Pray that in her trial hour
Tempests may not be revealed!

From restless slumbers and from sleepless dreams
The chief had risen on that trial day,
His sturdy heart o'er-filled with blank dismay,
His brain encumbered with redressive schemes
That burst in forging. Wearied and in pain,
It seeks those futile forgings to retain,
Which form so quick, and ever burst again.
A web of weak material well weaved,
A likely tale that may not be believed,
A chain whose forceful links are torn apart,
A hopeless cause defended with much art—
Are not more useless for the end required,
Nor further distant from the end aspired,
Than all those multiform redressive schemes
That cross the chieftain's mind in waking dreams.

An iron bar half eaten through by rust,
An oak whose heart has crumbled into dust,
Are types of that apparent, useless force
Of weight inert, decaying at its source,
Which loads his mind, yet bears no pressure weight—
So hard it is, yet so inadequate.
He wills to turn aside the risk incurred,
But Will breaks down before the plighted word
Whose pressure rests where Will so greatly erred.
He wills to treat that risk with hard disdain,
But Will, though strong within him, can sustain
His pride no longer:—with a bitter groan
He says, "The risk is Sybil's, not my own—
Yet only in one sense, for by this vow
(Or promise, which I may not disavow)
I've charged my heart and conscience with remorse,
To follow an unwise and crooked course:
And now I feel that the redressive schemes
Which crowded yesternight my waking dreams
Were mere delusions.—There is no redress:

I may not quash this act of foolishness,
I may not straighten now the crooked way
That leads necessity so far astray;
My plighted word forbids.
Come pride of heart!
All-potent principle, do thou impart
That confidence which thou alone dost give
Through blind continuous affirmative
And self assertion. Honour, conscience-proof,
I'll don thee as a garment."
The reproof
Of conscience wearies him, who no escape
From such can see in honourable shape;
For when reproof confronts unfinished sin,
While made necessity doth hedge it in,
The wilful mind that makes it turns about,
With eyes fast closed against a gleam of doubt,
And like a rat within a corner pent,
In blind despair and rage most impotent,
Attacks the thing he may not circumvent.

Thus Roderick, confronted and at bay,
At length throws off that feeling of dismay
Which made him think, for one which makes him act—
A practical advance from words to fact,
Though not to wisdom, which must not be sought
In action, but in some producing thought;
For outward circumstances often give
A hue to action merely relative:
Whilst action, in an unrestricted sense,
(Let not the truly active take offence)
May sometimes mean no more than patience in suspense.

"Honour conscience proof," he says,
"Arm my heart these latter days:
Conscience yet my heart dismays
Much, though foolishly.

"Arm my heart with coat of mail;
Conscience doth my heart assail,

Pride alone doth not avail,
Save offensively.

"Arm my heart, which in its pride
Hath the scabbard cast aside,
Showing towards the thing defied
Weak hostility.

"Pride is called a deadly sin:
Honour, though it merge therein,
Claims a Christian origin
Most respectably.

"Come then, honour, conscience-proof,
Guard my heart 'gainst self-reproof,
Lead me on to self approof
Through necessity.

"Hark! the warden's horn I hear—
See, the daylight doth appear:
Heaven's voice resoundeth clear
In proximity.

He flies religion's clear reproof
For honour's more elastic proof,
And makes necessities to serve his false behoof.

In brief the stranger knight is he
Whose mind and actions most agree
With Roderick's latest views on made necessity.

The chief turns deadly pale,
And hastily repents,
And changes his intents
When change will not avail.

He knows the Prince full well,
And deemed him far away:
His presence on this day
Seems like a deadly spell—

He knows the Prince, and cries,
"Oh! honour, conscience-proof
Why keepest thou aloof,
When passing doubts arise?

"My child, my only one,
What peril hangs o'er thee
By my authority,
Oh! Sybil lost and won!

"'Twas not for Ulster's prideful Lord
I destined thee, my child:
I ne'er had pledged my knightly word
To one so stern and wild.

"I destined thee for one whose fame
Is second unto none,
Whose love thy answering love should claim
Ere by his lance 'twas won.

"And therefore to his distant home
On Kerry's rock-bound shore,
Where ocean billows break in foam
And ocean tempests roar,

"I sent a herald long time since
To seek the brave and courteous Prince,
Who long ere this had been my guest,
And surely had thy heart possessed:

"But grave affairs for many a day
Have kept, and keep him still away.
Oh, foolish pride, oh, rash intent,
That left the risk of the event
Within this hapless tournament!

"And now it is too late—too late:
I leave thee to thy needless fate,
I impotently stand aside,
And see thee won, thou hapless bride.

"The trumpets sound to horse. Too late, too late!
Oh! were he here whose coming I await,
E'en yet!—but now my heart is desolate."

IV.

Now the lances are couched, and the war-trumpet sounds,
And the war-steeds are pawing the earth with their feet;
Now they're off, and like thunder the green turf resounds
With the tramp of their steps and the shock when they meet.

They have met—and the war steeds uprear with the shock,
And the wild Prince of Ulster has dealt such a thrust,
That, while firm in his seat, and unmoved as a rock,
He has made his antagonist roll in the dust.

Sound the trumpets! another rides forth in his might.
"Oh! Sybil, my child, he is down, he is down!
And my heart sinks indeed at the dolorous sight,
For I rested my hopes on his well-earned renown."

Now another—the chief bites his lip in despair;
And a palcy-pink hue tinges Sybil's fair face,
While she trembles a little, as though half aware
Of a capable wish that had not found its place.

Now a fourth takes his station: but who is the knight
That in hot haste spurs onward the last hill to climb?
Now the chief sees him come, and exclaims at the
sight,
"It is he, it is he! He's in time, he's in time!"

But the pathway is steep, and winds round a ravine:
They are charging again ere he gains the ascent;
Now his plume 'mid the crowd of spectators is seen:—
Is his coming too late to control the event?

Hasten on, hasten on! there's no time to be lost,
For the wild Prince hath brought the fourth knight
to the ground:
Hurry on!—or before the tilt yard thou hast crossed,
A fifth combatant's trump his pretensions will sound.

"Prince Ferriter, haste! or my child's fate is sealed:
There is time, for the fifth knight doth not yet appear.
Hasten on, hasten on! or my heart must be steeled
To the sorrowful lot of that daughter so dear."

He spurs his good steed through the glittering throng,
But the time runneth short and the concourse is great.
Hark! a clarion sounds.—"Thou hast waited too long."
"Oh! my innocent child—he is late, he is late!"

"Say not so, oh! my father:—there's yet one more
chance,
There is hope while the fifth knight is firm in his seat.
And he *is* firm as yet—he has broken a lance,
And the wild Prince's triumph is not yet complete."

"Nor shall be so, whilst *I* breathe the warm breath
of life,"
Cries the gallant Prince Ferriter, reining his steed.
"By St. Patrick! fair Sybil shall not be his wife,
If this arm can such cruel compulsion impede.

" By unhorsing these knights he may win her to-day,
But his prize I'll dispute while there's blood in my veins;
For though no one the chief's plighted word may gainsay,
The resource of a combat *à l'outrance* remains."

Now Prince Ferriter's unattached heart is astir,
And the maiden's cheek warms with her first woman's blush,
There's an instinct within them which seldom doth err—
Which betrays in a mist, and reveals with a hush.

His visor is up, while a back ground of light
From the clear summer's sun shows his features in shade;
They have looked at each other, and paled at the sight,
For the fate of two lives in that look is conveyed.

On a summer's midday when the sun is on high,
And the clear, steady force of its light is entire,
An object in shade, if its presence be nigh,
Has the softness of mist, and the brightness of fire.

And if we look forth from that clear shaded light
At some features whereon the warm sunbeams are playing,
How like rosy morn viewed from freshening night
Seem those features whose warmth we are freshly surveying!

Thus softly distinct are his features in shade,
And they tell of resolve firmly grappling with sadness,
Whilst her's are in quick-changing colour displayed—
And they tell of anxiety struggling with gladness.

She looks once again, and becomes deadly pale:
Then her cheek crimsons o'er with a hot, rapid blush:
That mysterious instinct begins to prevail,
Which betrays in a mist, and reveals with a hush.

But meanwhile, the fifth combat has fiercely begun,
And success still inclines where it rested before.
"Oh! my child," says the chief, "thou wilt surely
be won;
And thy sorrowful fate I may only deplore."

"Say not so!" she replies: "there is yet one more
chance,
There is hope while the fifth knight is firm in his seat.
See—they charge! He's not down—he has broken
a lance;
And the wild Prince's triumph is not yet complete."

"Nor shall be so, whilst *I* breathe the warm breath
of life:"
Says Prince Ferriter, slowly, now growing quite
pale:
"Not against her own wish, shall she e'er be thy wife,
Prince of Ulster, until against me thou prevail."

Now the lances are couched, and the knights charge again,
And a noise, as of thunder, rolls over the ground;
And they meet with a crash; then a sharp cry of pain
Bursts from Roderick's lips—'tis a terrible sound.

Yes!—a terrible sound of regret unavailing;
It comes from a heart that with grief is embued:
And it tells of much power in agony failing,
Yet, by the same agony fiercely renewed.

As the echoes of waves in a hollow sea-rock,
Quickly render the sound in a varying tone,
While the cavern itself vibrates much with the shock
Of those echoing sounds which are there quite alone,

So the chief's bitter cry at once follows its cause,
But the sound takes its tone from the vibrating soul,
Which has felt the loud accents of sudden applause
Through its own hollow traceries hollowly roll.

Those wild shouts of applause, which burst forth through the air,
Like a white squall that breaks on the low-booming ocean,
Bid Sybil and Ferriter sadly prepare
To examine the depths of their new-felt emotion.

The multitude shouts, for the fifth Knight is down—
Both himself and his horse roll their length in the dust:—
Thus in all times the voice of the people doth crown
With loud-echoing praises a home-driven thrust.

So the multitude shout, and the victor comes forth
In the vigorous ease of unquestioned success,
While a modest demeanour enhances his worth,
Though his heart triumphs inwardly nevertheless.

Still, in fact, his demeanour is partially true,
For some little humility reaches as far
As the surface of feeling—he cannot subdue
A conviction of heart which his pleasure doth mar—

A conviction of heart, not of mind—for the one
Can repel, but the other can only receive—
A conviction, that in the reward he has won
There's an inner success he will never achieve.

He comes forth from the lists, the fair Sybil to claim:
She sits rigidly helpless, like one in a trance:
Then he marvels, and thinks, "I have gained a high fame,
And my guerdon is due; yet I doubt to advance!"

But the shouts of the multitude strongly persuade
him;
They strike on the ear in a bantering tone,
And he struggles to throw off the doubts which
pervade him—
Those doubts that he feels, yet refuses to own.

'Tis a powerful stimulant, we may suppose—
That half-bullying favour of public applause,
Which excites our self-love, and contrives to
impose
As a large debt of honour its own private laws.

'Tis a powerful stimulant, we may suppose—
From the practical proof of a demagogue's life,
Whereon Δήμος so much approbation bestows,
As would seem to make bliss of perpetual strife.

So the shouts of the multitude please the wild
Prince,
And persuade him to feel much ashamed of his fears;
They excite self-importance, yet cause him to wince,
And half fancy those shouts are but embryo jeers.

Thus admonished, he mutters: "What meaneth this
shame?
'Tis not she, but myself, that has been in a trance.
I will shake off this folly:—I've gained a great fame,
And my guerdon is due: doubt I, then, to advance?"

He approaches: the Lady remains quite unmoved,
With her countenance fixed—neither blushing nor
pale;
But a voice whispers, "Prince! thou hast not yet
approved
This thy right—for against me thou first must pre-
vail."

He replies: "Be it so, when my leisure shall serve!
But my right I have proved—thou must wait 'till
I've gained
Its entire fulfilment; from this I'll not swerve.
I regret—but can't help, if thereby thou art
pained."

"It beseems thee to banter, discourteous Knight,
Thou who vauntest intentions that do but disgrace
thee:
Thou holdest an unjustifiable right,
But the pearl that was wrongly pledged never shall
grace thee."

Prince Ferriter slowly pronounces these words
In a low voice that audibly rings through the air;
And the challenge, thus publicly given, affords
A relief to his heart from its weight of despair.

Many eyes are on Sybil, but her's are on none;
For a new state of being to her is revealed;
And a new scheme of life, in a day-dream begun,
Which her own heart has neither declared nor concealed.

Many eyes are upon her—she heedeth them not,
For her mind is apart from what passes around.
"Hath she yet," says the Chief, "comprehended her lot?
Sure she knows not the promise wherewith she is bound."

The wild Prince is perplexed: she remains quite unmoved,
With her countenance fixed—neither blushing nor pale.
"I have won her," says he: "my fair right I have proved:
But my heart at this horrible calmness doth quail."

Still the shouts of the multitude strongly persuade him,
That Sybil is waiting the Victor to greet,
So he struggles once more with the doubts that pervade him,
Then comes quickly forward, and kneels at her feet.

The Prince Ferriter says: "Oh! unchivalrous knight,
The renown thou hast won doth indeed but disgrace thee;
Thou holdest an unjustifiable right,
And the pearl that was wrongly pledged never shall grace thee."

CANTO II.

I.

A summer's day o'ercast with wintry clouds,
A perfect harmony on strings mistuned,
An aspiration which the world enshrouds
From higher things wherewith it had communed—
Are types of beauty in the outer dress
That sin hath woven for the things of earth
By effort of a forceful ugliness
That taunts and teaches with satiric mirth,
And shadows human efforts even from their birth.

Within that list, so old, yet ever growing
Longer and longer still, as time rolls on,
And minds (that search without the hope of knowing)
Crave not the beautiful to rest upon—

Within that dreary list we find recurring
Often, yet slightly varied in degree,
The marriage sentiment concretely erring,
Far from its source of love—in sooth to be
On strings mistuned a chord of perfect harmony.

For harmony is not less true in form
Because 'tis falsely rendered: The blue sky
Is ether still, though hid by cloud and storm;
And Justice doth not always to the eye
Show justice in detail; but all that's great and good
Is ever open to a special plea
That wears the surface-hue of likelihood.
And in this sense the marriage state may be
On strings mistuned a chord of perfect harmony.

And so it seemed to be, when Sybil's vows,
Like Pagan incense, were about to rise
Unhallowed unto Him who disallows
Their prayers who any backward thought disguise,

As her's did, more and more, from day to day,
Since love had entered in her virgin heart,
Uprousing from its depths untold dismay,
Which grew and grew. Meanwhile, she sat apart—
Her struggling thoughts intent upon their counter-
part.

Their perfect likeness was indeed created
Quickly as her's, and had an equal growth.
Her heart and Ferriter's were firmly mated—
Firmly as if conjoined by sacred oath.
But honour, strangely clothed in garb of duty,
Binding the chieftain to his plighted word,
Forbad her; so that, pining in her beauty,
Day after day her wearied fancy erred,
Seeking to find the way of hopes to be inferred.

For inference is two-fold—sometimes plain,
But often coloured by the hue of passion:
Sometimes to fixed conclusions it will chain
Our thoughts, but oft'ner vary in its fashion.

Thus, in those weary hours of silent waiting,
Sybil, by sorrow tested, saw no course
With fixed result, but secretly debating,
Fearful of holy counsel, had recourse
To inference vague in form and coloured at the source.

For instance:—She inferred that Heaven's blessing
Rested directly on her pure intention;
Yet, whilst her hopes in secret thus confessing
Truly, she gave to them a false extension.
Blessings from Heaven come in many ways;
Trials deform them, sorrow dims their rays,
Time gives denial of them by delays;
Yet blessings, though unseen, are blessings still,
Howe'er obscured they be by erring human will.

What blessing in this lower world could come
Through Ulster's Prince upon the hapless maid?
Her future life seemed very burdensome
Thus circumstanced—a solemn masquerade.

But life is very short, and after-life
Outstretches to the Infinite: and e'en
Within this little time of spirit-strife,
The hapless here below are sometimes seen
On sorrow meekly stretched, reposefully serene.

It was not, then, impossible, but, rather
Verging on likelihood, that Sybil might,
Through conscious duty to an erring father,
Find resignation in her heart, despite
Of human nature, and the ceaseless plea
Of true affection in its agony:
She might—but Love and Pity fencing in
Her hopes from either side, began to win
The outworks of her Will and instincts feminine.

This had not been, if far away from him
The mourning maid had passed the interim:

But, while those trial-days outrolled their course,
Her heart with his had held an intercourse
Which, though they met but once, decided quite
Her strong repugnance to the Victor-Knight,
And love for him who was his opposite.
In that brief meeting, she her heart conferred
On him—and thus it was that quickly it occurred.

One day as Sybil in a wood was riding,
Meshed in the mazes of her own heart, she,
Impressed with sadness at the fate betiding,
Mused all unmindful of her company.
Her steed was fleeter far than all the rest,
And she, without intention, urged him still,
Meanwhile, in secret, fully self-confessed,
She felt in that free galop a free Will
Uprising o'er the strong immensity of Ill.

Thus, onward through the green rides of the wood
She galloped, gaining ground at every stride
On her attendants, who, her absent mood
Perceiving, saw with fear that eventide
Was gaining on the sunlight, and that soon
The winding narrow glades would grow obscure,
Remaining so, until the rising moon
With silv'ry rays her fancy should allure
On tracks unknown to her, nor probably secure.

At length, grown weary of her rapid course,
The Lady checked the fleetness of her horse;
And then the figure of a mounted Knight,
Within the dimness of that waning light,
From formless shadow growing on her sight,
Her pulse beat quicker, yet she scarce knew why,
With mingled sense of pain and ecstasy.
She paused in doubt—the Knight drew near with speed,
And soon Prince Ferriter dismounted from his steed.

In silence deeply eloquent, the Prince,
All pale and anxious, reverently stood
Some moments: she had not beheld him since
Their eyes met at the Tournay; yet she would
Have known him, even with his visor down;
For that one interview had been to her
A lifetime; and this meeting did but crown
The fact with surety that she did not err
As to her heart.—Meanwhile, thus spoke Prince Ferriter:—

"Oh! Lady, since I first beheld
Thine eyes reflected in mine own,
All earthly hopes have been dispelled
That seemed not coloured by thine own.

For had I not indeed reposed
My fev'rish thoughts on hope of thee,
At once this heart would have been closed
Against all other sympathy.

"No deed of arms as yet I've done
For thee, my first and only love;
But such renown as I have won
Is thine, save what is due above.

"I pray thee, let the service true
Which fervently I hope to give,
Incline thee, in this interview,
To bear with patience, and forgive.

"Perchance too forward I shall seem
In thus addressing thee; but thou
Dost know, oh Sybil, what extreme
Necessity compels me now.

"For *now* is thine:—to-morrow's eve
Will not be thine, unless—unless
Thy heart be able to receive
The fervent hopes which I confess.

"Oh, Sybil, wilt thou trust to me
Thyself?—canst thou on me bestow
Thy heart?—then in this world below,
With all its falseness and its woe,
And griefs which all must undergo,
There *is* extreme felicity.

"There *is*—for it was not thine own,
That vow of pridefulness outgrown—
That vow which Faith and Truth disown.
Thy father by his word enchained,
(Full well thou know'st how deeply pained)
Implores thee tacitly—and thou
Hast power to content him now,
His peace and ours is in thy hands,
And He who gives the power, commands.
Oh! Sybil, may I be to thee
Thy escort? For thy soul is free,
And faithful love is thine respectfully."

When a ship with her white sails outstretched in the sun,
Through the blue ocean current is smoothly careering,
The eye measures falsely the course she has run,
For the sea also moves over which she is steering.

And thus, by the current of passion drawn on,
Sybil knows not whereto her volition is growing:
She measures the length it has visibly gone,
But the current it rests on is rapidly flowing.

A rose-garden scenting the air far around,
An influence felt through the whole sphere of thought,—
A cause whatsoever, perceptibly found
Far within the wide circle wherein it was sought—

Such are common enough; and all three represent
How the rays of true love are felt further than seen:
Thus already doth Sybil's heart firmly assent,
Yet the thing she assents to, her thoughts do not mean.

She assents to Prince Ferriter's words with her heart,
Yet intends not in thought what her quick pulse betrays.
There is tacit agreement—the two will not part:—
Resolution is firm, but intention delays.

Then the Prince mounts his horse and moves slowly away,
And he guides, scarcely touching his love's bridle-rein,
Till with quickening speed, they are making their way
Down a thick-wooded slope to the opening plain.

When the pathway on which they are riding is seen
Whitely gleaming in moonlight unbroken by shade,
Sybil starts, as in dread lest some new thought should mean
What her last act has proved, and her pulse has betrayed.

Like the hue of the moonlight that mantles the earth
Is the colour now quickly suffusing her cheek:
'Tis the tint of a blush chilled by shame at its birth,
The surprize of a nature both ardent and meek.

"I consent with intention that doubts its own cause:"
Thought the maid—and her words had an audible tone,
Such as breaks oftentimes on a very long pause
Of the mind, when it long has been musing alone.

"I consent with intention; and what I intend
Varies widely from all I've intended before;
Yet I feel that the thoughts of this day comprehend
All the innocent hopes which I cannot restore.

"I consent with intention—oh would I did not!
I had rather start up as from sleep, and discover
That all passing things for a time I'd forgot,
When I lost both volition and heart to another.

"But why does volition elude the firm grasp
Which directed it once? Rather, why do I feel
That I cannot, or do not, reach out to, or clasp,
With a personal will, and a personal zeal

"This my personal force? Oh! I cannot reply
To these questioning words, for my heart is in pain,
And I cannot on thinking or feeling rely,
So infirm is my heart—so unsettled my brain.

"As the tide gives direction to ripple and wave,
That disturb the wide sea flowing on to its goal,
So my heart is of some motive power the slave,
And the course of my mind is within its control.

"There's a tide in my life, and it flows very fast;
And I cannot, or do not, resist it with might.
Oh! I would that the time for resistance were past,
For my soul is obscured, and I see not aright.

"Yes! my soul is obscured liked a star bathed in mist;
Yet its light is half seen through a pervious veil;
I could burst through the veil — but I do not resist
With that oneness of wish that could make me prevail.

"No! Resistance would now be in vain—'tis too late;
Now the time for reflection and choice is no more;
And I feel—oh! I feel, in this terrible strait,
That I would not escape what I deeply deplore.

"No! I would not escape—I deplore what is past;
But how can I deplore what is changeable still,
And yet alter it not?"
But the die had been cast
By the union of accident, Passion and Will.

And these accents of sorrow, which had not indeed
Crossed her mind with their words, but, with impress of meaning,
From contrary thoughts her heart forcefully weaning,
Became now complete, then departed with speed.

They were gone, as a light that has just been
extinguished;
They *were* not—or could not, at least, be distin-
guished;
But, into their elements quickly resolved,
Not one doubt by their flickering light had been
solved:
They had passed out of mind, as she moved quickly
on,
Like a stream that the night-clouds are floating
upon.

II.

With a quick moving surface, and stillness beneath,
And its rapid flow broken by ripple and wreath
From the eddying water, and eddying breeze,
Or the sharp rocky turn overshadowed by trees,
The broad river glides on, without rest or control,
On its way to the ocean whose depths are its goal;
And its course is the same, though the heavy night-cloud
Its clear ripple and flow in thick darkness enshroud:
Thus the depth and the flow of man's heart alters not
Through his thinking, or ceasing to think, of his lot,
Which he makes, as it were, in a stage-acted plot.
When by mere diagnosis disease shall be cured,
And through mental analysis pain be endured,
Then by thinking we may from our passions be lured.

But enough of this theme!—We must move quickly on,
Or lose sight of the track that her mind is upon.
Can the mind, when it thinks not, move on?—yes, indeed—
As the tide, which may not change its course or its speed,
Yet doth, nevertheless, without resting, proceed.
And her mind was indeed rolling on like a tide,
For in one state it did not one instant abide,
But moved on of itself—or appeared to do so,
Yet controlled not its course, nor its ebb, nor its flow.
In our minds we are moved by sensation and thought,
And the former seeks us, but the latter is sought:
We're compelled by the one, and we feel the compulsion—
Propelled by the other, yet feel no propulsion;
And like the quick growth of a plant in the Spring,
Is the change unperceived while 'tis yet on the wing.

The changes we think, are with questions inlaid;
But the changes we feel, are scarce felt till they're made.
Thus, from phase into phase of quick mental sensation,
Propelled by the power that caused its creation,
Her mind swiftly glided on one inclination,
Then stopped all at once, as it smoothly careered,
And was startled to see what intentions appeared.
But intentions, how startling soever, are still
Either blossoms or fruits of the sensitive Will,
So that ere the appearance of change was displayed
To her conscience, the change had already been made.
They had left the greenwood and were crossing the plain
And the rising moon shone o'er the path they were taking:
Her lips softly smiled, yet her heart was in pain,
And it yearned towards the spot she was freely forsaking.

'Twas then, (as in fact has already been told,)
It was then—while the path and the green leaves were glistening
With dewspeckled moonlight of shapes manifold,
Sybil started and paused, as if mentally listening.
The mind has its echoes, as well as the ear;
And an echo is less than its primary sound,
In so far as it is not so loud or so clear;
Yet we start when we hear it, and listen around,
As if seeking the source of that faint repetition
Within some indefinite semblance of space;
And the feeling aroused is akin to contrition—
"We've dallied with time, and are out of the race.—"
Such the words we may gather from mental sensation,
As meanings which are not pronounced to the ear,
But which owe to the Feelings alone their creation,
And almost in physical semblance appear.

'Twas an echo from childhood that startled her now,
When the ties that she inly consented to sever
Shone forth in the past, by the light of that vow
Which had slowly and tacitly burst them for ever.
She paused for an instant, as if she could hear
And distinguish those things through her physical
senses,
Which, echoed in memory, sounded unclear,
And self-consciously burdened her heart with
offences.
She paused for an instant—or rather, her steed,
As they turned from the wood, felt the tightening
rein,
And by little and little, relaxing his speed,
He stood still on the crossway that skirted the plain.
Then the Prince laid his hand on her rein, as at first,
But she saw not the movement—her heart was
athirst;
And drank in many hopes, with less definite notion
Of each, than a general sense of emotion.

Then her horse felt the scarcely perceptible touch
Of his fingers, that held, but impressed not the rein,
And, by force of that nervous, magnetical clutch,
Was led on at a quickening galop again.

In a quick-rushing gale, when the weather-cock varies,
And gardens by changeable currents are swept,
The dead rose-leaves, though whirled as by sudden vagaries,
Within the high walls of the garden are kept:

Thus, though tossed here and there, through successive exposure
To storms of conflicting doubts, raised and expelled,
Sybil's echoes of childhood were by an enclosure
Of Time, from succeeding time strongly repelled.

When the soft breath of summer grows fresh at noontide,
And the underwood's deep shaded leaflets are stirring,
Detached cherry blossoms are borne far and wide,
For all light, loosened objects the fresh gale is spurring:

And Sybil, by forceful affection borne on,
Was beyond the soft echoes of childhood progressing,
Bestirred by the Love she had rested upon,
Which her heart feared to own, yet was inly confessing.

The blossoms of trees or of fair expectation,
Detached from the stems that have given them birth,
Have within them no power of fresh germination:
These die on conjecture—and those on the earth.

But the storm that is robbing the trees of their
bloom,
Or a heart's present hopes into distance is throwing,
Will scatter some seeds in comparative gloom,
Which in process of Time will be visibly growing.

A storm in her heart (though she scarcely per-
ceived it,
So smooth is the movement of strength in excess,)
Had thrown forward new Hope, and the Future
received it,
As seed that is planted; but nevertheless
She appeared not such earnest of joy to possess.

There was Hope in her eye, and a smile on her lip,
And a vision of mutual Love in her heart;
But her thoughts hastened onward, as if they would
skip
All the definite knowledge which rest would impart.

They had ridden full many a mile without speaking,
For silent and sad is the march of resolve,
When it nears its completion, and onward is seeking
Last scruples, that Time is about to dissolve.

They had ridden full many a mile, and their horses
Perceptibly flagged whilst approaching a turn
Of the far stretching vale, where a rivulet crosses
The wide tract of heath covered thickly with fern.

Then Prince Ferriter said, as they drew near the brook,
And the steeds were down-arching their necks to the stream,
While the foam from their bits fell and floated there,—"Look!
With the morn of our bliss fades the fairy-like dream,

"As the orient beams of a midsummer sun
Melt the shadowy dawnlight; for ere the decline
Of this day which horizonward now has begun,
With the blessing of Heaven thou mayest be mine."—

"With the blessing of Heaven—"
But, after repeating
Those words, he was suddenly silent, for Hope
Had begun to break down while events were completing
Its realized shapement and definite scope.

Sybil raised her dark eyes till by his they were met,
And a quick-spreading paleness came over her face,
While contending emotions of joy and regret
Were alternately first in a visible race.

An emotion, of what kind soever it be,
Must rise up like a Lamp-flame, or else it will die,
As the lightning, whose flash now illumines the sea,
Now is looked for in vain through the darkening sky.

'Twas the storm-flash of passionate hope that now darted
Athwart Sybil's mind, as they forded the stream;
And there co-instantaneously came and departed
A bright track of light through her dim, waking dream.

But when darkness has closed o'er the lightning's blue track,
And between banks of storm-cloud the spaces are white,
We may oft, near the spots where the sky is most black,
See the clear morning star looking silvery bright.

So when passionate Hope in misgiving is quenched,
And the mind settles back into dim agitation,
A light amid darkness is often intrenched,
As a guide—and moreover an anticipation.

Was such now in Sybil?—or would the new morn
Of reality break on a darkening fate,
And the far-stretching line of its visible dawn
From fresh light into gathering darkness abate?

Oh! the answer to this, as it surely appeared,
Might be guessed from the radiant look in her eyes,
When the dream, at reality's dawn, disappeared,
And some half-uttered words were outspoken in sighs:

For a fair day of life, that should presently dawn
To the clear, steady light of a tropical morn,

Might be seen in that radiant look,
As she gazed on the pathway that skirted the Hill,
While her steed's pawing feet and wide nostrils were still
Freshly bathed in the rippling brook.

At the end of the path stood the Convent-gate,
As a token of peace to her free-will fate—
So, at least, it appeared in her sight;
For she took a strange measure of what she had done,
By the shadow from hopes with that action begun;
And the measure contented her quite.

Then they rode up the hill without saying a word,
But the feelings of each were outspoken and heard
In the depths of their unified hearts,
That were lulled into rest by the magical spell
Which becalms the pulsations of those who love well,
Ere the first blissful stupor departs.

III.

At a bowshot's length from the Convent Wall,
(If, at least its position I rightly recall,)
In those days stood a goodly town;
And Prince Ferriter said in a whisper low,
"Dost thou see the grey walls of the Abbey below,
Where the hill sinks abruptly down?

"Thou art here in the holy mother's care,
So with hopeful heart I will hie me there,
And within its walls abide,
There awaiting the term of thy needful rest,
And the hour wherein, at the Altar blessed,
I may lead thee forth as my bride."

They parted as those who of meeting again
Have security firm in belief:
There was sudden emotion of heart and of brain,
And that softest conceivable echo of pain
Which in fact is a kind of relief.

Then the Prince galloped on, down the steepening
hill,
And drew rein at the Abbey gate;
For he would not delay what he had to fulfil,
Being moved, not by effort, but instinct of Will,
That was spinning the thread of his fate.

And then to the grey-haired Abbot, he said,
"Oh! Father, I crave thy blessing,
On me and on her whom I straightway have led
From a tyrannous grasp, with intention to wed—
Her troth and affection possessing."

"My son, thou art anxious," the Abbot replied;
"And thy vow may be right, or be wrong;
But the impulse of passion, and instinct of pride
Are, in practical use, very closely allied
To the forcible Right of the strong."

IV.

Ere the sun was midway in the white-clouded sky
That now dazzled, now darkened their sight;
They were far on the road, and with far-seeing eye
Could the far-stretching mountains of Kerry descry
A dark line sharply outlined in light.

For the last solemn words of the Priest had been said:—
They had turned from the Abbey in haste;
A pale-flickering hue had their features o'erspread;
They had shuddered in ecstasy mingled with dread
At the course that was yet to be traced.

Then in haste they had turned from the grey
Abbey gate
By a pathway that skirted the hill,
And the good Abbot's blessing they scarce could
await,
For the moments were charged with a possible fate
Which themselves might avert or fulfil.

But at length, when the blue hills of Kerry were
seen,
So that distance was clear to the sight,
And the long, weary way that extended between,
Caused a sudden emotion of woe unforeseen
To fall cold on their hearts, like a blight,

Then it was that Prince Ferriter said to his bride,
In a tone of o'er-anxious assertion;
"Oh! Sybil, my bride, we *indeed may confide*
In the Blessing—that *surely with us 'twill abide*
(But his thoughts *then were under coercion*)

"That surely a Blessing we have, as this day
We have had it, and feel—at this hour:—
This hour—"
But Sybil was turning away
Her most love-speaking eyes with a look of dismay
That affection might not overpower.

"Oh! heard'st thou," she said, "the last words that were spoken?
They creep on my memory now,
As a spell-darkened warning whose spell has been broken,
Those words give a sudden and quick-piercing token
Of truth that I fear to avow.

"For the good Abbot's blessing was certainly given,
Yet afterwards qualified thus:—
'Against parent's authority have ye not striven?
By force not parental to this are ye driven?—'
A terrible question for us!"

Then Prince Ferriter, touching his horse with the spur,
Cried: "Oh! Sybil—my Sybil, not so!
Morbid conscience it is—such as cannot but err,
Which from happiness now would thy fancy deter,
And a fancied remorse would foreshow,

"Yes! a fancied remorse, for thou canst not indeed
Feel that truly, which truly is not.
'Tis fatigue and unrest that now falsely do plead—"
Thus he whispered, meanwhile as they slackened their speed,
Her misgiving she slowly forgot.

V.

At ever-slackening speed (for now distress
Crept o'er their horses with a sure advance,
And growing signs of feeble weariness,
That marked a growing danger of mischance)
They silently rode on across the vale,
Intent on holding up their weary steeds;
While doubt did over Sybil's mind prevail;
And what she had elected from two needs,
Seemed not the better, though her loving heart
Would then have broken, had she then been told
That she from Ferriter must live apart,
And, through a blighted life, herself withhold
From him by constant effort—such a strain
Of *No* on the affections, unrelieved
By self-devotion, how could she sustain?
That loving heart would break, if so bereaved—

Would slowly break—and how could self-devotion
Be in her, then outside a Cloister? How
Could aught beside absorb the immense emotion
Throbbing throughout her pulses? But that vow
Might not be her alternative, unless
What could not be, should be—there were a change in her;
For well she knew that she might not profess
That holy state, unless that state she could prefer.

She thought those words, or recollected them,
In such brief time as dreams are said to fill,
The instant ere we wake: she uttered them
But not in syllables, nor with free will.
Anon she syllabled within her mind
These further words, and, while a bitter cry
Escaped her, unrestrained and undesigned,
Their sense came forth as if from memory.

"Self-offerings made by an exhausted heart,
Self-offerings made in weakness, not in strength,
Self-offerings from one's outer self, apart
And circumstantial, are but a resource
Which—"

Then she started, for a sense of pain
Shot through her like a spasm, and was gone:
It left her musing dreamily again,
But left her also paler and more wan.

Prince Ferriter had failed not, all this while,
This little while o'erfilled with care and pain,
To read her fears, and seek to reconcile
The struggling claims upon her heart again.
"Thou grievest with a daughter's grief," he said:
"Undue misgivings tinge the fount of bliss
That wells up from thy heart."

He bent his head
And on her brow impressed a first long kiss.

That kiss was like the air of early morn—
The orient gale from dappled summer's sun
When o'er a bed of roses freshly born
Where light and colour are but just begun
It softly roused her heart and calmed her mind
By vague persuasion of her half esteem
Then joy with self-respect became combined
And freshening hopes with self-disparagement

VI.

O'er Kerry's hills the moon was calmly shining,
Silv'ry, translucent—as a lake by night,
And shadow-streaks its breadth was interlining,
E'en as man's thoughts upon the Infinite.

Nor otherwise appeared, in Sybil's eyes,
The reflex from the light of blissful love,
Still shadow-streaked with dim anxieties
Obscurely seen through cross-light from above.

Two days they now had journeyed, and three nights,
Or part of three—'twas early in the third;
And presently they saw the Castle's lights—
Meet emblems of the hope so long deferred.

A steep ascent above the murmuring sea
Led shortly to the gate. "Oh! Sybil mine,"
Said Ferriter—"as that soft unity
Of sound, so is my happiness and thine."

And now the weary distance was o'erpast;
The Castle drawbridge fell with friendly sound;
They rode into the court-yard—now, at last,
She sprang into his arms, and touched the ground.

She sprang into his arms, and rested there,
As if the ground had been not: he supported
Gently her faltering steps, and, in her ear,
With whisper low to confidence exhorted.

The moonbeams glistened o'er the heaving sea,
That soothed with murmuring sound her anxious ear;
Thus trembling joy, and soft monotony
Of mutual emotions, calmed her fear—

Her fear of Heaven's anger, and her sire's—
And evil thence resulting—and, besides,
The trembling hope that nuptial joy inspires
In maiden heart, and maiden Will divides.

The moonbeams glistened o'er the heaving sea;
The rock-bound Castle towered far above;
Each held unwearying monotony—
The one of sound, the other of true love.

VII.

A brief immeasurable time
Had been, and passed away,
But still was fresh as morning's prime,
And solemn as Cathedral chime,
Within their memory.

It passed, as on the perfumed gale
Of summer eve doth pass
The sweet sound of the nightingale,
Or scent that springing flowers exhale
When dew is on the grass.

These pass on, and away, yet not
Suggestively of ending:
They are renewed upon the spot
Unbrokenly and unforgot;
Nor change doth seem impending.

The hours o'er Sybil thus rolled by
Above the heaving sea;
Her joys, as tremulously bright
As aspen-shaded morning light,
Came on unbrokenly.

Unbrokenly?—Aye, even as a river
Flows o'er a level bed,
While softly overhead
The balmy breeze doth shiver.

Seeking the open sea
Flow onward sequently
Its ripples even-sized;
And sky-tints of bright light
In changes infinite
Flash o'er the surface inter-harmonized.

But, ere it reach the sea,
A rock, till then unseen,
Uprises suddenly;
Then, with a troubled motion,
Still forwards to the ocean,
The stream flows brokenly.

The current of Sybil's life thus flowed,
Its ripples were even-sized,
Its colours were harmonized,
And its varying hues with a warm light glowed.

To a gentle breeze—
The pulse of the air,
May we not compare
The heart's ecstasies?
As the gentle breeze
O'er the flowing river,
So softly quiver
Those ecstasies.

The rock unseen
Breaks the river's flow,
The unforeseen
Can the Known o'erthrow.
A sudden shock
Broke the flow of her life,
And evil did mock
At the sorrowing wife.
Yes! the spirit of evil,
Licentious, not free,
Kept alive by the devil
Ubiquitously,
Mocked her whithersoe'er
It could enter a mind
Of her story aware,
But in judgment purblind,
Or a heart through ill-regulate nature unkind.

Mock, mock, oh! spirit unblessed;
Such mockery is not misplaced:

For indeed most consistently such is expressed
By thyself unto one who a duty transgressed
With a dutiful Will, and a conscience confessed,
And a heart by the purest love graced.
Mock, mock, oh! spirit untrue;
For thou hast a false witness in what will ensue:
Such in seeming confirms
What thy false word affirms—
That misfortune and Love are convertible terms,
And some failure of duty a *sine quâ non*
In such love as true sentiment shineth upon,
Which but lasts at the rate of its visible power—
The stronger, the shorter in time, like a shower.
Thou hast a false witness in what will ensue:
Thus may Facts put the false in the place of the True.
Mock, mock, oh! spirit pervading
The atmosphere breathed by the soul,
When it slips through the floodgates of mere self-control,

And, like waves of a flood [illegible]
All the landmarks invading.
And often 'tis mockery's province, I trow,
All perversion to hide,
In the moral of truth, by contriving to sow
Sense of shame over judgment, that facts, as they
grow,
May be falsely implied.

Yes! oh, spirit of evil,
Licentious, not free,
Kept alive by the devil
Ubiquitously,
Mock her whithersoe'er
Thou canst enter a mind
Of her story aware,
But in judgment purblind,
Or a heart through ill-regulate nature unkind.

VIII.

The foeman's trump doth sound
Shrilly and fiercely at the Castle gate;
The foemen up the rocky way have wound:
Their arms reverberate.

Prince Ferriter uprises
Palid and fixed in feature, as one dead
In battle-field: from Sybil he disguises
Nothing—soon all is said.

His words are few in number;
But in their utterance there is the sense
Of many words, outlengthened and intense,
As images in slumber—

That is, if it be true,
As doth appear, that dreams are come and gone
In time too brief for words to rest upon,
While slumber bids adieu,

And what it has impressed
On memory doth last through after-hours,
Leaving the fancy with its waking powers
Quickened, yet much depressed.

Scarce can he school his voice to whisper in her ear—
"Oh! thou whose image lives within my heart
Unequalled and apart,
Hope on, and feel no fear."

"What foe is at the gate?"
She asks—her question holding its reply
Within her quick-drawn breath most helplessly
In tones disconsolate.

"'Tis Ulster's Prince—"

"But he
Doth hold in pledge my Father's knightly word,
I have not told thee yet what I have heard,
Foreseen, and still foresee.

"Revenge he fiercely swore,
Intending by thy death to reach my heart,
That hath no vital force from thine apart:
Yet this he said before.

"And what doth happen now?
E'en what my heart forefelt—they are united
Here to destroy thee: so will wrong be righted
By a foul massacre."

"The Castle walls are strong,"
He answered absently. "Thou must not fear
That these, though numerous, can enter here
Who come protecting wrong."

"Aye, but avenging too," she faintly said:
"Though wronged in form of Right
I sinned in God's pure sight
When, shrinking from his burden, wrongfully, I fled.

"This mutual absorption is the blight
Of Evil o'er the growth
Of Love, thus from us both
Excluding all besides, before our straining sight.

"For Love like our's, if blessed,
Contains indeed a vast—a boundless wealth
Of sympathy for all;—but grown by stealth
It shuns all neighbour-love, and strains in its unrest.

"E'en at this awful hour
My heart, beyond its own immense affection,
Feels not, but stagnates in immense dejection,
Far beyond human power.

"Our life-dream sets—not fades.
Twilight of Life outstretches 'neath a veil
Of falling gloom around, and doth prevail
O'er Hope which it invades.

"That conscience-burdened Hope,
Which only thought to hold what was possessed,
Now sinks, but is not dead: and in Unrest
Pretends a wider scope."

"Ah, yes!" the Prince replied—"through life and—after.....
Soon I'll return." She paused, and said, "The strife
Within our hearts will end but with this life:
Our Hope is in hereafter."

IX.

"Hereafter" and "Life" were the words he heard best,
And their sound was a charm to his ear,
And their places in time were most clearly expressed
By the treasured possession wherewith he was blessed—
The possession of Sybil most dear.

And he turned almost gladly away, to defend
The strong Castle which held that possession;
For now 'twere relief 'gainst the foe to contend,
And anxiety's force in that struggle to spend,
Hurling Knighthood against foul oppression.

That struggle could silence awhile his great care,
Yet the cause of anxiety grew,
And at length he was suddenly rendered aware
Of an imminent peril, that bid him beware
Of the worst that on earth could ensue—

E'en the worst, as regarded himself and his bride,
For a breach in the wall had been made;
But he smiled a grim smile, and the foeman defied,
And a refuge for Sybil did quickly provide,
Whereunto she was quickly conveyed,

By the oldest retainer, trustworthy and true,
Through an underground way to the rock
Which uprose in the ocean, and (known but to few)
Had a cave that the sea-spray did sometimes bedew,
When the ocean waves fell with a shock.

'Twas an intricate cavern, approached from the shore
Round a low, broken ledge of the cliff,
Over which, at high water, the wild waves did roar—
It could only be reached then by plying the oar
At much risk in a little light skiff.

To this cavern he now sent her forth with all speed:
He stood still while he saw her depart,
Made the sign of the Cross, for her safety to plead,
And again in the breach his retainers did lead
With an aching but resolute heart.

'Twas then sunset—the struggle grew fiercer till night,
And they still were defending the breach,
When a quick-spreading glare, as of moving torch-light,
In the Castle itself, sharply burst on the sight
From the side overhanging the beach.

Waving torchlights were scattered about at that spot,
And they grew in the storm that was raging,
The wild Prince's men had conceived a foul plot
On the side where the hard-pressed retainers were not,
Whom the foe, three to one, was engaging.

"Oh! the Castle's in flames!" was the half-smothered cry,
And some turned not from facing the foe;
But some wavered, as doubting which foe to defy—
And the places of these there were none to supply,
At that crisis of imminent woe.

Then, from two sides at once, the two armies rushed in,
And between them Prince Ferriter stood:
They had work yet to do, 'ere the day they should win,
Amid fire, and smoke, and fierce passions, and din,
Though they poured through the breach like a flood.

As a storm-shaken oak, rooted firm in the ground,
Stood Prince Ferriter firm on that spot:
Where he stood were the dead and the dying around,
And he stood till his own deadly foe he had found:
Then the rest seemed as if they were not.

Through the dense mass he came without striking a blow,
And they drew back in awe as he passed.
"Prince of Ulster," said he, in a tone hoarse and low,
"If thou wilt thine advantage of numbers forego,
This dark hour perchance is thy last—"

"Or thine own. We're well met—thou art he whom I've sought:"—
Was the answer; the others drew back
In grim awe, whilst a combat à l'outrance was fought
And fierce passions were master, and life set at nought,
In a mutual, guardless attack.

Thus they fought without pause by that thick-
smoking light,
As a tempest before it doth lull,
Till with giant-like force, did Prince Ferriter smite
His foe's helmet of steel, and transpiercing it quite,
With his battle-axe crushed half the skull.

* * * *

* * * And then

He dropped his battle-axe, while armèd men
Drew round in awe where motionless did lie,
In death-fixed form of grim hostility,
The Prince of Ulster, and the combat ended
Then, or perhaps by instinct was suspended—
Instinct reciprocal: in fact, no more
Could then be done—the struggle then was o'er;
The Castle taken, but one victor lord
Lay dead—the other gladly sheathed his sword,
Rejoicing gravely.

"Heaven be praised!" said he,
"For gracious help in mine extremity.

My knightly word is cancelled by the blow
That laid thine enemy and Sybil's low.
Thy losses I deplore—I could not grieve
As much, were they mine own. But now—relieve
My aching heart"—
Prince Ferriter let fall
His blood-stained battle-axe.
"Yon cave holds all
I care for on this earth:"—was his reply—
"Yon cave between the raging sea and sky."
Then Roderick turned pale, and faintly said,
"I'm sick at heart, Prince Ferriter."
They sped
Through smoke of dying torch-flame, which had not
Extended in the Castle—that foul plot
The south wind had defeated—through the smoke,
They sped, unnoticing: no word they spoke,
But onward through a postern gate they went,
Then down the rock, a perilous descent—

That shortened much their way, and then, between
Loose portions of the cliff, bespotted green
By tide-washed sea-weed, close along the shore,
Amid the tempest's fast-increasing roar,
Until at last they found the water reach
Above their waists, just where the shelving beach
Turned suddenly around a rugged ledge
Of rock, that jutted at high water's edge
In ordinary times.
The Prince turned pale,
And, as he climbed the rock, a sudden wail
Escaped him audibly, although the sound
Was mingled with the storm which raged around—
So bitter was its tone.
Within the rock,
A door, secured with bolts and massive lock,
Was felt—not seen, and opened with a crash,
As one that opened seldom, while the plash
Of their mailed feet in water—even there
Knee-high, appalled them; so that, in despair,

They wandered slowly through the dripping cave,
Awe-struck and speechless, till an ocean-wave
Rolled in, and onward—even to the door,
And in its backward rush well nigh outbore,
Adown the cave, upon the seething sea,
These two, now heart-stunned into apathy.

Then both perceived the total of their loss
In one vast sum, whose meaning flashed across
Their minds in one dark moment—leaving sense
Of pain and mingled colours most intense;
As forkèd lightning, on the straining eye
Struck partly blind by it, leaves agony
Of blind remembrance vividly impressed,
Meanwhile of sight the eye is dispossessed.

No word was said by either, but each cast
One look upon the fatal spot where last
The living form of Sybil had reposed,
And last had clung to, ere the billow closed
Around her, dragging down that living form
Within the power of the howling storm:—

One look they cast upon that fatal spot—
The spot where she had been, who now was not.
To doubt was now impossible. Her grave
Had been within some foaming ocean-wave,
Like that which now, uprolling from the south,
Had well nigh swamped them at the cavern's mouth,
And sucked them down into the heaving waste
Of waters by indented rocks displaced.
A wave like that had borne her swiftly out
Upon the yielding sea—they could not doubt;
For no one could approach the cave, unless
By that low door whence they had gained access;
Which door, fixed fast and firm into the rock,
Was excavated through a solid block
Of cliff into the cavern, whence the wave,
In its return along the sloping cave,
Had borne her down into the seething sea
That held below its fell supremacy.

"It was my last resource,
Oh! wretched father," said the Prince at length—
"My last, when numbers crushed me in my strength.
Now woe may run its course."

His tones were hoarse and low;
His once athletic form now stooped and trembled;
Grief had o'ermastered him, and he dissembled
Nought of his mighty woe.

He did not speak again
('Tis said) for many weeks—he lived a year,
And closed in Palestine his brief career
Of ecstasy and pain,

And fame hard won.
He fell in fighting for the Holy Grave
Of Him who died our sinful souls to save—
The One Incarnate Son.

And, also on that field
The stiffening body of the Chieftain lay
Transpierced and lifeless: each was borne away
Upon his bloody shield.

All three have now been dead
Full seven centuries, and nought remains
But ruined walls; yet still the rock retains
The name of Sybil's Head.

THE PEDIGREE OF PERSUASIONS.

PROLOGUE.

Some scattered Facts by memory collected,
Shadows from days long past—rise up before me,
Reaching beyond their birth-time, till the present,
Linked with the Past and Future, forms a chain
Of causes and effects.
In thoughts that float
Outside the Harbour of dogmatic Truth
Security is oft comparative,
And certitude is like the peakèd crests
Of ocean billows in their changeful forms,
Whereon the vessel's keel may hardly touch
But either the sharp crest is blown to spray,
Or sinks a little as she rises to it.
Therefore let all descriptive images,
Thoughts or opinions, having no credentials,
Bear their own burden without privilege,

But also without prejudice: and, if
Among these poor conceptions there shall be
Some few on which the radiant beams of truth
Fall slanting into shade, as rays of moonlight
Slant from the hovel to the roadside bank,
'Twere well perhaps to take them as they are—
Cross-glancing lights and shades of holy Truth
Revered through Love of God, not love of search—
Not as an endless Theosophic Tramway
Bearing the excavations of new views,
But, as God's own Creation, to be honoured,
Followed, and practised.
This, in humble fear
Of touching such high matters, is the aim
Of an ideal Prologue to a sequel
Clogged with the heavy impress of its cause.

THE PEDIGREE OF PERSUASIONS.

PART I.

Scene near Eden. Angels and evil Spirits: invisible.

ADAM.

I wake to sentient misery:—oh, Death!
Thy meaning slowly opens out before me:
Fearful I stand upon thy shelving brink
Down-stretching into darkness unrelieved.
I would thou wert less real—then would Hope
Nourish endurance with the Possible.
Unsatisfying Knowledge! Thou whose goal
Horizon-like, entices, yet retires
Further, as we approach it, I perceive
Thy counterfeit of human happiness,
And wish it true, or unreality
More imitative of the thing it feigns.

Ye opposite co-workers, Pride and shame,
I feel your secret strength around me circling
Nearer perceptibly: your heated breath
Unnerves my Conscience, and excites my Will
With dim foreshadowings, through which I see
Two lines of sin run parallel through time.
Oh! wisdom of the past, thy warning counsels
Fade with the lessening memories of Eden:
Now canst thou only mark the accomplishèd
Or dimly show th' inevitable way:
So dim thou grow'st, that now I scarce perceive
The lessening form of thine efficiency.
Oh! vague temptation, indistinctly felt,
Prompting to thoughts that lead I know not where,
Yet feel 'tis evilwards—I hear thy whispers
Floating around me in the peopled air,
That seems o'erfilled with strange vitality,
Strong in a serpent-power of persuasion.

SATAN.

Unequally the force resistent given
To Man by his Creator, meets the shock
Of strong Temptation in its full career
Sent forth by Heavenly Power—nay, inspired
By God Himself, that so humility
May grow from self-conviction of his weakness.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Father of all creation!
We kneel in adoration:
We pray Thee that Temptation
Turn not man's heart from Thee.
See from Thy Throne supernal,
The intellect infernal,
Twining with Truths eternal
Hellwoofs of falsity.

CHORUS OF EVIL SPIRITS.

Weave we the Hellwoof so plastic and strong:
Make we the Right do the work of the Wrong!
Mental profusion,
By help of delusion,
Shall turn to confusion
Of thought and of deed;
Selfish ductility,
Pride and mobility
Make possibility
Bend like a reed.

OTHER EVIL SPIRITS.

By and bye things oppositely tending
Shall through illusion seem together blending:
Evil shall follow Good without offending
Dull conscientiousness:
Things homogeneous shall be separated,
Footprints of falsehood be obliterated,
Evil respected, Good despised and hated,
E'en though it gain success.

FIRST EVIL SPIRIT.

Dulness shall then be respected,
Genius shall then be suspected,
Goodness shall then be dejected,
Knowledge shall then be at fault;
Faith shall be voted stupidity
Nurtured by Priestly cupidity:
Then will the world with avidity
Tempt the infernal assault.

Weave we the Hellwoof so plastic and strong:
Make we the Right do the work of the Wrong!

Is it not generous,
Honest and vigorous,
Working for others, to be so vociferous?
Such commendation
Deserves imitation
And great admiration,
With wide propagation.

SECOND SPIRIT.

The Right and the Wrong, the Right and the Wrong!
The Wrong is so weak and the Right is so strong:
But Envy full soon, shall detract from the Right
One half of her now supernatural might.
And then, vis inertiæ shall heavily lean
On your spirits, I ween,
Who would seek to o'erpass the respectable height
Attainable now by a mere selfish might.
The Right and the Wrong, the Right and the Wrong!
Though Hatred is weakly yet Envy is strong:
And Envy full soon, shall detract from the Right
One half of her now supernatural might.

FIRST SPIRIT.

But when shall rivality
Called nationality,
Mock at the Unity
Sought in Equality?

When?—
Oh! the world must progress,
And man's wickedness
Be deemed in excess
Of its means of redress,
Ere then.

SECOND SPIRIT.

What shall make Envy so terribly strong,
That the force of the Right it shall give to the Wrong,
And so render Humanity's trials life-long?

THIRD SPIRIT.

E'en this—its connection
With all self-deception:
For man self-deceived
Is straightway relieved
From conscience' dread pang—when his God he has grieved
Or from conscious reproach.....

And shall do passing well
The bidding of hell
Whilst his conscience absolves him, for all he can tell.
The Right and the Wrong, the Right and the Wrong,
Temptations and trials full long
Unto Conscience belong.
But the self-deceived conscience will make Envy strong.

FIRST SPIRIT.

Weave we the Hellwoof so plastic and strong:
Make we the Right do the work of the Wrong!
Mental profusion,
By help of delusion,
Shall turn to confusion
Of thought and of deed;
Selfish ductility,
Pride and mobility
Make possibility
Bend like a reed.

ADAM.

Oh! vague Temptation, indistinctly felt,
Prompting to thoughts that lead I know not where,
Yet feel 'tis evilwards, I hear thy whispers
Floating around me in the peopled air
That seems o'erfilled with strange vitality
Strong in a serpent-power of persuasion.

SATAN.

Unequally the force resistent, given
To man by his Creator, meets the shock
Of strong Temptation in its full career,
Sent forth by Heavenly Power—nay, inspired
By God Himself, that so humility
May grow from self-conviction of his weakness.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Father of all Creation!
We kneel in adoration,
We pray Thee that Temptation
Turn not their hearts from Thee.

See, from Thy Throne supernal,
The intellect infernal
Twining with Truth Eternal
Hellwoofs of falsity.

EVE.

'Twas I who first betrayed the Sacred Trust,
I who first yielded to ambition's lust,
I who must doubly bear, for me and thee,
The faded Impress of Divinity.
I would not shift the burden, if I could:—
I would not that the Eternal Father would.
God's one command I first did disobey;
On me the heavier load doth justly lay:
Unequal woe henceforth, shall chronicle our way.

'Twas I who ruined thee—'tis I whose care
It now must be to keep thee from despair—
Despair created by reacting force
Of unblessed hopes, assisted by divorce

Of soul from mind, a torture most intense,
A foe alike to sin and penitence,
A curse most horrible—to rescue thee
From this, or tear the mask from it, will be
A work most congruous with my ability.

Love, the one sentiment that still discloses
Heart-depths wherein Divinity reposes,—
Love, which alone in this our dire distress
Tells there was once a thing called Happiness,
Love which the Triune Author of Creation
Took not in punishment of deviation,
But, in His mercy, did reserve to me
In measure more exclusive than to thee,
Shall seek to shield from such thy fallen humanity.

Thou'lt wonder how my inexperience
Grasped the full measure of these questions—how
Or whence I learned them: nay, I know not whence;
I know them true—I cannot tell thee how;

But Love in woman doth indeed impart
Some present knowledge to her aching heart.
Whence learned I what I say, I cannot tell:
I only know its Truthfulness full well:
The instincts of my heart these words to thee impel.

I now would counsel thee of many things
That 'scape the fine analysis of reason—
Fine though it be, for vain imaginings
Are subtler yet in us, the slaves of Treason.
Waste not the precious gifts of intellect
Great in capacities thou canst not measure,
Seek not in lofty cloudland to project
The means to gain some Heaven-abstracted Treasure
Whereby to square God's Will, with human will and
pleasure.

For there are things, o'erleapt by human thought,
That lie within the scope of Human Love:
The valley's rich fertility is sought
In vain among the mist-crowned peaks above:

And human love in woman shall protect
When not adulterate by vanity:
A truer test it is than intellect,
Which fails before the heart's insanity,
Or shuffles 'neath the gaze of strong humanity.

And things too deep for Human Love to see,
Lie hidden in the depths of human prayer,
Without whose aid the Heart's conspiracy,
That Satan prompts, must lead us to despair.
And woman's nature thou wilt surely find
More prayerful and more passionate than man,
More temptible through love, but less inclined
To search beyond her intellectual span.
What man in strength can not, in weakness woman can.

I speak self-knowingly, and so define
The average of women yet unborn,
By that self-knowledge which is feminine
In kind and use—a faculty to warn.

But I have left unsaid what I must say,
Or let its import dwindle by delay;
So opportunity would pass away.
Oh! if thou lov'st me, and wouldst keep from harm,
List to the warning voice of my immense alarm.

I fell the first, and first repented; thou
Wert firmer then, and since; and thy contrition
Has not as yet compelled thee to avow
The sin that did create our fallen condition.
Pray, I implore, that God may animate
Our souls with Will, temptation to resist,
That so, altho' we are contaminate
By evil agencies that ne'er desist,
He may our strength direct, our weakness may assist.

Thou say'st the air doth teem with spirit-life,
And is o'erfilled with agents of temptation;
Yet dost thou not inure thee to the strife,
But takest refuge in self-contemplation.

Strength, which delayed thy fall, now makes thee
weak,
And that which helped my fall, now makes me strong;
For weakness prompts me Heaven's aid to seek,
And strength persuades thee to be firm in wrong:
In this the strong is weak—the weaker is more
strong.

Oh! Adam, if my words may yet avail
As when we lived in Eden blessedly,
If my unfailing Love may yet prevail
With thee, as once it did confessedly,
Now at this crisis of a freewilled fate
Seek Him whose loss no gain can compensate:
Seek Him who can our souls invigorate.
Oh! if thy heart doth cherish yet my love,
Pray, I implore thee, pray, in Faith to God above.

ADAM.

Thou deeply loved, in whom I still am blest,
Thy words have found their echo in my heart,

Which throbs more heavily each day, depressed
By dim perception, understood in part.
For active Will and wishfulness are two,
And Love may be divorced from thoughtfulness:
What prayer has done, temptation may undo,
If only one small outwork it possess;
Hence darkened is my heart, with sad forebodingness.

I fear not now for things alone concerning
Thee and myself; I tremble in discerning
Deep-growing penalties of human earning.
Deep-growing penalties, begun in time,
The free-will period of sin and crime:
Therefore I stand appalled, as one who knows
That, through his sin, will sin be generate—
Sin ever growing, changing as it grows,
Disguised, concealed—whilst Free will, though innate,
Can seem—

SATAN.

—And is, in fact, an o'er-prevailing Fate.
Unequally the force resistant, giv'n
To Man by the Creator, meets the shock
Of strong Temptation in its full career,
Sent forth by Heavenly Power—nay, inspired
By God Himself, that so Humility
May grow from self-conviction of his weakness.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Father of all Creation!
We kneel in adoration,
We pray Thee that Temptation
Turn not their hearts from Thee.
See, from Thy Throne supernal,
The intellect infernal
Twining with Truths Eternal
Hellwoofs of falsity.

CHORUS OF EVIL SPIRITS.

Weave we the Hellwoofs so plastic and strong:
Make we the Right do the work of the Wrong!
Mental profusion,
By help of delusion,
Shall turn to confusion
Of thought and of deed;
Selfish ductility,
Pride and mobility,
Make possibility
Bend like a reed.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

A woman yet shall crush the serpent's head;
The Word of Life shall save the living dead;
The Godhead shall descend, in form of man;
He will in mercy, who in power can.

VOICE OF AN ANGEL.

To man, from Paradise now justly driven
Forth on his wilful journey to the grave,
Th' Eternal Spirit has, in mercy, given
One way alone whereby their souls to save.
A woman yet shall crush the serpent's head,
The Word of Life shall save the living dead;
The Godhead shall descend in form of man;
He will in mercy, who in power can.
But man, by God protected, was self-lost,
And hence will not be saved without self-cost:
Man's life shall be of Faith a lifelong trial:
Faith, formed by Love, and working self-denial.
Therefore from Faith Man must proceed to works
'Neath which in practice, many a danger lurks.
Non-doers shall not have impunity:
Nor rich nor poor may claim immunity.

The corn must first be buried in the ground
Before it ripens to fertility;
So man for future honour must compound
By self-abasement and humility.
Through rocky beds the torrent seaward flows:
And man through toil to rest must work his way:
And this, when done, is only what he owes—
A penitential debt that he must pay,
A debt he can ignore, but cannot put away.
And in this proper labour of man's life
The labour-Law his erring steps must guide;
For there is work destructive and untrue;
The range of sin-born labour is world-wide;
And Satan waits his movements to misguide.

Work is the inference of adoration,
An active form of self-renunciation.
To work is both to do and to refrain,
And self, in either case, man must restrain.

MOCKING SPIRIT.

Work is a consequence of grumbling poverty,
The active principle of sharp cupidity—
To work is both to do, and to refrain,
According to the chance of loss or gain.

CHORUS OF EVIL SPIRITS.

See now our honest simplicity!
Here we are giving publicity,
E'en to opinions we differ from:
Nay, we correct and revise
So well, you would scarce recognize
Them, or tell whence they came hither from.

FIRST SPIRIT.

And this our advice
Is so very concise
Who can its power resist?
For we only ask
That from duty's task
You quietly now desist.

Time will shew
Whether or no
Good shall be all seductive;
But we're much deceived,
And shall be much grieved
If evil be not found obstructive.
Not evil unmixed
Will stand betwixt
Man and perfectibility:
If the world we'd not fright
We must shade the red light
Of sin by respectability.

SECOND SPIRIT.

O! the mildly contentious and well-meaning man
Is the man to do mischief as fast as he can,
If his conscience with suitable binding we span.
He will do right well
The bidding of Hell
Whilst his conscience absolves him—for all he can tell.

VOICES OF ANGELS.

A woman yet shall crush the Dragon's head—
The Word of Life shall save the Living Dead:
The Godhead will descend in form of man,
He will in mercy, who in power can.

THE PEDIGREE OF PERSUASIONS.

PART II.

Within the wheelmarks of progressive facts,
That mark their passage o'er the world's high road,
The wheel, at certain points, more strongly acts,
As if it bore thereon a greater load:
But sometimes also doth the yielding soil
Receive the impress in a larger size,
And shows the true results of mighty toil
In patent evidence without disguise,
That leaves a wider track on human memories.

The soil is marked in large or smaller size,
But sometimes it adheres, and sometimes not,
To that which has impressed it: fallacies
Sink deep indeed and wider, but the spot

On history's long level, where they passed
Retains their impress loosely, whilst the True,
In all things whatsoever, leaves its cast
Sharp-edged and lasting—old, yet ever new;
For Truth is plainly marked, though often lost to view.

The parent stem doth branch both up and down,
To right and left the mountain shapes its course,
The church and brothel mark the new built town,
The stream meanders even from its source;
And man, in his primeval generations,
Trod the opposing ways of wrong and right,
With prayer uprising, falling with temptations,
Darkened with sin, or cheered with heavenly light:
So Time from the Equator moves to day or night.

Through singleness of Heart was Abel wise,
And knowledge graced obedience in Seth,*

* Now this Seth, when he was brought up and came to thos years in which he could discern what was good, became u

While Cain, in pride of soul, refused to rise
Above the low-hung atmosphere of Death.
And Nimrod may be named as having been
The prototype of Godless human Force,
That spurns the evidence of things unseen,
Sets men to prate of freedom till they're hoarse,
*And trains Democracy non-freedom to enforce.

The Light that gleams through shadows o'er
Creation—
Shadows of Sin and Might—is from the Star
Of Bethlehem, which holds in concentration
All that its past and future bear afar.

virtuous man; and as he was himself of an excellent character, so did he leave children behind him who, &c., &c. * * They were also inventors of that particular sort of wisdom which is concerned with the heavenly bodies and their order, &c., &c.—*Whiston's Josephus.*

* He (Nimrod) persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it was through His means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured their happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, &c., &c.—*Ibid.*

And just as beams of light point every way,
But fall obscure o'er non-reflecting parts,
So do we find a strong or feeble ray
Of Truth Divine wherever human hearts
Are willing to reflect what that alone imparts.

When Pagans tried to act and think aright,
(We need not here a list of them by name)
Refusing all the patronage of Might,
Obtained by men through worship of the same,
Dim lights were they, in pitchy darkness placed—
Uncertain guides where Truth was absent yet,
That shadows from the Truth might so be traced,
Though Truth itself in certainty is set,
Where through mere human thought it never can be met.

Oh! great and many are the instances—
Too many for a passing notice here
Of heathens traversing far distances
Along the way of Truth, in hope and fear:

And many bore their witness in the dark
Of things that moderns see not in the light;
And one indeed did evidently mark,
In written books, the hope that was in sight—
The hope that guided him throughout his life-long
night.

Oh! Plato, thy much-argued reputation
Suffers from friends more deeply than from foes,
By reason of a quasi adoration,
Such as to pantheistic worship grows.
I wot that thou wouldst marvel much to hear
The things thy name is called on to defend,
When learnedly invoked with brow severe
As sponsor to all arguments that lend
Their help to fancies that on non-belief depend.

Honour to thee! The work that thou hast done
Has yet some influence on human thought,
To lead it on the course thou wouldst have run,
By causing it to seek as thou hast sought:

For there are minds which, when imbued with thine,
Pursue some train of thought from thee acquired,
And move inductively, till they incline
To doctrines which, by Holy Church required,
At first had with distrust their timid souls inspired.

Honour to thee! oh, thou whose constant Hope
Watched at the hidden door of Revelation:
Honour to thee on earth, for thou didst cope
E'en with the mind and vigour of thy nation.
Honour to thee, within the full extent
Of what thou couldst have done—But here we leave
The insufficient light of high intent,
For clearer, truer witness, and receive
The warranty of Faith in what our souls believe.

'Tis often said by wordlings, as if proved,
With clever sophistry and sharp contempt,
That martyrs witness nothing, and are moved
By human passions, wilfully to tempt

A wretched fate—for instance, by ambition
Moulded in form of earnestness and peace,
Or combativeness preaching fierce contrition,
Or, in some cases, by such long increase
Of self-inflicted pain, that Death is a release.

But if we would define what we intend
By martyrdom, perhaps we might obtain
Some inward help our judgment to suspend,
By which the matter judged must surely gain
A negative assistance: and perhaps
The error might be found, not in the proof,
But in the wording, which the proof enwraps
With double sense entangled in the woof,
Which hangs about the brain, like cobwebs in a roof.

Defining martyrdom as witness made,
And sealed by cruel death, of something known
To those through whose report it is conveyed,
Such views thereon are like to change their tone.

For if our own experience we question,
Touching the symptoms of belief, we find
Assurance ever tending to congestion—
Wisdom most rare, and ever, in its kind,
Inimitably stamped on the recipient mind.

But numbers, by a plastic chain united,
Strongly impose on units multiplied,
And borrowed Thought is apt to be short-sighted,
Bounding its view by that which is supplied—
Especially when, through shortsightedness,
It sees less clearly some self-sacrifice,
Whose beauty it had rather not confess,
In fear, perhaps, of practical advice
Therein contained in terms unpleasantly concise.

The Devil instances untrue beliefs—
Diseased secretions of the erring mind,
Producing morbid pleasure, out of griefs
And grievous pains of body, as a blind

And false analogy, to curtain out
The witnesses of Faith, who make their way
To God through self-renouncement most devout,
Confronting death or torture day by day,
While these, their counterfeits, but struggle and
delay.

Thus persecution for maintained belief
Is insufficient of itself as proof
Of martyrdom, nor is it even chief
Component—nay, it seems to wait aloof
And strongly throw itself into the scale
Of truth and counterfeit with equal force
Apparently: yet listen to the wail
Of suffering along its ruthless course!—
We hear a dual sound, that varies at the source.

There is belief that takes its growth from pride,
As unsound flesh uprises from disease;
There is belief that doth at anchor ride
Securely on Temptation's chopping seas:

There is that keeps its place by nervous tension
Tightening the Will—a top without a base;
There is that separates the Soul's attention
Strongly from Earth to Heaven, by force of Grace
With which that Soul's consent is seen to interlace.

And both are witnesses—the one of Truth,
Of self the other—Self in Faith's disguise;
The one developing a changeless youth,
The other trained by fruitless energies.
The one is evidence of God to man,
The other is a proof of human force;
And when they both are tested by the ban
Of human judgment in its crookèd course,
We hear a dual sound that varies at the source.

Those two beliefs are in that dual sound—
The one is Faith, the other mere adhesion;
Both in the List of martyrdoms are found
Together, yet devoid of true cohesion,

Fierce persecution for belief is wide
As man's impatience; and, if so defined,
The martyr's history must needs abide
A stumbling-block of doubt to many a human mind.

But he who thus its proper sense would close
Within an insufficient definition,
Cramps the design in magnitude, like those
Who dwell in desert lands in one position.
Yet howsoever we and many more
May be convinced of this, and deem it plain,
The wrong intent keeps coming to the fore,
And he who holds it will perhaps remain
In error fixed—for crowds that error will maintain.

And not alone in martyrdom we see
The evidential monuments that man
Has raised, or writ of, lead to fallacy
Of inference; but often, in the van

Of anti-Christian argument, we find
A force of feigned analogy in store
Where'er an evidence of Faith would bind
Conviction to itself—and furthermore
Men sometimes make them seem productible before

The thing they counterfeit—or rather, placed
On record where they may appear the first
In date of wording—so are falsely traced,
With show of truth, from sequences reversed
By men who darkly hint—or, rather sow
The inference, that records may from facts
Like willows by the water, downward grow,
And spread around. Such poison oft abstracts
Vitality from Hope, and weakened Faith contracts.

And thus untrue foreshadowings are placed
As finger-posts on falsehood's broad highway,
And their fulfilment carefully mistraced
From allegoric copies that convey

A seeming likeness, or from twisted facts,
Or pantheistic fancies that betray
The soul's necessities: e'en Truth attracts
Within its own fulfilment, an array
Of petty questionings, assuming victory.

Time rolled its even course. The martyr-saints
Had gone to their reward, but left behind
Pure unity of Faith in Christendom
And Beauty of an unexampled kind
Whereto (at least in form of Art-expression)
Prayer in this realm instinctively returns,
Aweary now of Protestant concession—
Weary of whitewash, schisms, pews and urns,
And dim self-consciousness that tends to what it spurns.

Men call those ages dark—and so they were
If shade be darkness, and the chastened light
Of Faith be less convincing than the glare
Of open Theories, whose centred might

Like sunbeams focussed in a little space,
Benumbs our vision with intensity,
And, by so doing, helps us to efface
The impress of that strong immensity
Which silently reproves each proud propensity.

Men call those ages dark—and so they were,
As bodies which communicate much light
But shine not on themselves: for whatsoe'er
Of Beauty, and of fundamental Right
Exists in modern England may be traced
Therefrom as remnant or development.
The dim reflection of their light has placed
A halo round society, and lent
A stable character to Ages subsequent.

They left us what we faintly imitate
In very feeble copies, which express
A fitful passion to originate,
Unsettled purpose, deep self-consciousness:

For art-creations are derivatives
Of Beauty from the Fountain of true art;
And he to whom art-labour only gives
Artistic energy will ne'er impart
That Beauty from whose cause he proudly stand
apart.

They left us Progress as a Principle—
And not a passion aiming at destruction,
Faith, in its unity invincible—
And not a science growing by induction,
Art, as the homage of external Beauty—
Not as a means of glorifying self,
And unpaid Charity as Christian duty—
Not as a means of placing on the shelf
The surplus poverty that cannot help itself.

We recognize that Christian duty still
Within this Realm—nay more—it holds its place
Most fitly in the firm-set English will,
And leaves its marks in ever widening space:

But anarchy of Faith arrests the hand
Of bounteous Charity, and we dispense
Through paid officials, charged on house and land,
What house and land provides for indigence—
Alas, that we should thus profane benevolence!

Is this our custom in what else concerns
Our local management?—We know 'tis not;
But private worth gratuitously turns
Its powers to such work, and on the spot
Whereon 'tis wanted, Englishmen arise
To do completely what is elsewhere done
By paid officials—thus they signalize
The fact, that working rivals we have none
For cheapness of resource, in all supplies
Of energetic help to unbought enterprise.

But can relief for Paupers be obtained
Through other means than rates and legislation,
Save to the limited extent attained
Praiseworthily by private combination?

Few are the idlers in this Land, and much
The silent mass of purpose that doth tie
Her children to their work—there is not such
Perchance in Europe :— Could frugality
Do more than now is done with funds of Charity.

It cannot now: a subdivided creed
Cast piecemeal o'er this once believing Land
Enervates Faith, still labours to impede
That unity through which it might expand
Before its object, whose inclusive size
Is measureless as is transmundane space,
Which in unfathomable distance lies
Where'er the Telescope may seek to trace
A light between the stars, in dark vacuities.

The Middle Ages left their place in Time
And settled in the Past—their place was taken;
"Priestcraft" at length was to its centre shaken;
Caxton and Cranmer would this Land awaken;
Then should men see how much they were mistaken

Then should the world move onward to its Prime!
And so it was—How could it not be so,
When all our Libraries do overflow
With "noble rage" 'gainst those who ventured to say
no?

But is it certain that the printing press
(Or what it prints on)* is indeed the cause
Of progress towards that mental manliness
Whose advent is announced with much applause?
Its Lampslave rather—Vegetable growth
Inclines to rank luxuriance, and so
Does human thought—One cause I trow was sloth
Joined with impatience, making mighty show
Of vigour in the eyes of mortals here below.

* "The power of multiplying copies by the printing press, would not have produced the subsequent diffusion of literature, but for a sufficient supply of paper at a price within general reach."—*Whateley.*

In this wise—Sloth does duty for repose,
Impatience for activity; and these,
By self-assertion crowned, make men suppose
A Truth-producing force of energies,
Which are not where they seem—they are not *in*
Their work, but in its gains; they strongly tend
Like Babel, upward, with a view to win
A worldly apotheosis—and depend
On intellect, much trained its fellows to transcend.

Is this the Manhood of the world—and not
More truly its irreverent old age,
In full possession of the heritage
Devised by Satan in his serpent-plot?
Is this the Printing Press's true effect,
And not a wild perversion of its power,
Such as of yore constructed Babel's Tower?
Truly the Babel-spirit did project
The slavish license claimed for modern intellect.

Yet present history doth well supply
A deep, full margin, where we may descry
Repose and work arranged in symmetry,
And power, not from multitude derived,
Nor suddenly by sleight of Will contrived,
But single-rooted, and content to wait
Events which it may not annihilate:
Such bears the banner of the Cross unfurled;
Such represents alone the Manhood of the world.

The middle ages yield their place in time,
And others follow, each in consequence,
Yet broken in some places, like a rhyme
That scans imperfectly: and now commence
Those false deductions based on certain facts,
Wherewith in words of truth is formed a lie,
Whose specious form of truthfulness attracts
Much working spirit and humility,
To show towards Truth itself that great hostility

Which binds the nation's wisdom. From the state
Of seeming Facts undoubtingly defined
As being in this realm, we might collate
Much seeming proof, from statements long enshrined
Within the Faith or fixed opinion
Of men intending well, who give to these
The force of doctrinal Dominion,
Yet are they nothing but Truth-tinted pleas
That forge divine consent to restless heresies.

A fact related truly is a gem,
E'en though it deck a tinsel diadem:
A fact reversed is half way to disproof,
Though prejudice be loud in its behoof:
A fact perverted is a smooth-faced foe
That secretly empoisoned seed doth sow;
Its force is gentle and its action slow.
Perverted facts compose Truth-tinted pleas
That forge Divine consent to restless heresies.

Perverted facts are sharp and specious guides
That tortuously lead, with front erect,
Unthinking minds to falsehood; and besides
They indicate cross-ways with doubt infect.
Thus Truth is loved, "not wisely, but too well:"
Men love th' Almighty's will, as they conceive it,
But with the changeful thoughts of Man inweave it;
So are their eyes down-fixed, as by a spell:
The Pole-star is above, yet do they not perceive it.

Perverted Truth is twofold, as respects
The ancient creed of England: it infects
Her Faith and works in many a honest eye,
And teaches Reverence to falsify
Its own traditions: it would be a task
Entailing volumes to uplift the mask
Which o'er each dogma and historic page
Did blandly smile, and quietly engage
Long cheated Faith to yield its offered heritage.

Accuse we modern History of Fraud?
Why so, if other causes may be found
In honest Theory? The track is broad,
But overgrown with statements and unsound.
No layman's task it is to say how far
The possible condemns the unfulfilled,
In point of conscience; but the calendar
Of daily wrong, from erring hearts distilled,
Is much increased by those that are not straightly willed.

Thus wrong accumulates in Time's abyss,
And some is doing, some already done:
We culpably allowed the course of *this*,
And *that* was by our acting self-begun.
The part already willed we cannot will
Creatively; but floating on the tide
Of other's movement, we are *doing* still
When helping active falsehood to abide
Where, sheltered by the Truth, it safely can misguide.

An iron bar is slowly worn by rust
That grows upon its surface; the fine dust
We tread on was produced by slow effect
Of friction that the eye could not detect;
The doubts that now encumber human life
With principles at elemental strife
Have slowly worked their way through length of Time
And widened onward: slowly the sublime
Dissolves into the form of pompous pantomime.

And slowly too, the Doctrine of Negation
Takes its progressive steps, inclusively
From Luther to Colenso, by gradation
Moving towards unbelief delusively:
But slower yet, within its lesser space
Of time by one event preoccupied,
Did Infidel convictions take their place
In England, where all beauty still belied,
With silent eloquence, Religion falsified.

By force of mental vigour and of Will—
By force of new autocracy, that strives,
Through capital of Kingcraft, to fulfil
A deed at which all selfishness connives—
By force of non-confession, that reminds
Of nought that self-deception may omit—
By force of Property that strongly binds
Expectant owners to their benefit,
The force of England's Faith is summoned to submit.

It yields not yet, although the busy hum
Of Temporal success is loud and clear;
It yields not yet, though summoned to succumb
By forcible appeals to Hope and Fear;
It yields not yet, although the Trumpet-sound
Of Kingly force, with license to transgress,
Proclaims, upon a widening battle-ground,
Of feast and pleasure-worship, the success
Which lustful greed applauds in pride and fulsome-
ness.

It yields not yet, although in mixed array
The good and evil feelings of mankind
Confront temptation where it best may sway
The two approaches to the human mind.
It yields not yet, though would-be Reverence
And vague religious instincts, and the cry
Of English homes for national defence*
Are conjured up, to cheat the Public eye,
And sanction by default a great apostasy.

Years multiply in lustres while 'tis yielding—
Years of great weariness, though during these,
New property and hope of gain are wielding
Engines of pressure upon consciences.
It yields insensibly—long time elapses
Ere the great heart of England grows unsound
In tenure of its Faith; it slowly lapses
E'en like a slipping anchor, till 'tis found
At last, with what it held, on shifting sands aground.

* e. g. Against the Spanish Armada.

But when did England's Faith first slip its anchor?
When was the heart of England first infected?
When did regret first fail, and turn to rancour?
When might the nation's will be first suspected,
Touching a fact unwilled? Nay who can note
The moment when disease its victim smites,
Or tell exactly when the canker smote
The withered shrub?—'Tis thus the spreading blight
Of national consent is dateless to the sight.

As sometimes human bodies waste away,
E'en to the verge of death and slow decay,
Yet bear the germ of health in atrophy,
So yet the heart of England beats within
The threatened wreck of Faith—the fatal sin
Permitted by the nation, then completed
Blindly when out of her religion cheated.
Vigour there is within, and impulse true,
That must, in course of time, a healthy growth renew.

The Church's teaching is a starry light,
With mystery between and far away:
We see, yet may not reach, the Infinite;
We clearly feel, we distantly survey:
But Luther's theologic capital
And sinking Fund of Faith is very near,
In mental sense, as clouds in physical,
Which though they sometimes touch our lower sphere,
Have alterable forms that shift and disappear.

Such changeful creeds, with all opinion
Thereon depending, take their shape and force
From private vigour and dominion
Of mind o'er mind in social intercourse;
But private judgment scarce doth manifest
Its naked form with us—the English race
Has reverential instincts that divest
Full many a creed of sequiturs—and grace
With *quasi* reverence a heathen populace.

Go measure continental aggregates
Of differing Persuasions, fairly viewed,
With what unbiassed search accumulates
As proven here amid vicissitude:
You'll find here schism and a dead belief,
There living atheism, as the creed
Of large majorities, without relief,
Or sting from consciences, which intercede
In England for the Faith whose teaching they impede.

These changeful creeds were once to us conveyed
By force and cheating—on the continent
Some force with much ambition was arrayed
In hollow amity with discontent.
With us impressions enter deep and slow;
Respect for the accomplished, makes us bear
Incongruous results, and so men heap
Assent upon assent—while some forbear
To turn from those results whose causes they forswear.

The continental disputants are less
Religious but more logical—they hold
Their Faith provisionally, and confess
Their acquiescence in beliefs unrolled
By latest reading. English minds are now
With great discomfort plagiarizing these
They feel, but, seeing dimly, disavow
The influence through which their special pleas
Produce a sliding scale of false Theologies.

As fields when broken up for cultivation
Lie at the mercy of the elements,
Man's fundamental Hopes on their probation
Offer their surface to disparagements:
But if the broken ground be not worked out,
It gains by its exposure—and e'en so
In England, after this her day of doubt
And jealousy of dogma, there will grow
A Harvest of that Faith which Hell shall not
o'erthrow.

The seeds of this have been already sown
In form of spreading spiritual want
Whose evident existence men bemoan,
Yet cannot cure by nostrums vain and scant:
And many a social problem now afloat
Confounds the wisdom of this iron age,
Meanwhile perhaps the time is not remote
That saints have prayed for, and clear minds presage,
When England shall reclaim her long lost heritage.

The seeds of this are broadcast o'er her soil,
Yet ripen slowly, for we ever find
The English nature slowest to recoil
From images once fixed within the mind:
And therefore when the ancient Faith shall bring
Restored conviction to the English heart,
That ancient Faith, restored, will surely cling
And ramify: Perchance it may impart
A vigour of belief with scarce a counterpart.

With nations, as with men, effect is slow
In working out from its producing cause;
And cross-seas of events oft overflow
The line its onward course distinctly draws.
The line is oftentimes effaced behind,
While yet unformed ahead; and only he
Can trace its course correctly in his mind
Who thinks along the line which he can see
Retraced by work of thought upon his memory.

Onward, through darkness, from the Reformation
Rolls the slow tide of negative belief,
Which passing through progressive desolation
Fails not to reach the atheistic reef.
Some strike not on it—but the reef is there:
Thereto the course doth lead to which they sail
Whose chart is private judgment, unaware
That wind and tide of logic must prevail
O'er influence that still resists it in detail.

There *is* resistance to the current's force
That bears to leeward many Christian souls,
And leaves them on the reef without resource
While wave on wave of doubt still freshly rolls;
But such resistance, on the whole, is less,
Through frequent falling off, than heretofore:
The evil principle is in excess
Of that which used to furnish forth of yore
A strong but false defence which nothing can restore.

Her heresies have been bemoaned and patched,
And are so still, by instincts half perverted;
So that she deems herself not quite detached
From unity—nor seeks to be converted.
Not so, in other countries, where Persuasion
Spins its inductive changes in the place
By Faith once occupied: *There* no evasion
Tells of unconscious impulse to retrace
Uncertain steps from doubt that stares it in the face.

A withered branch torn off a living Tree—
An uninvested capital to spend—
A human form by art of chemistry
Made muscular when life is at an end—
These typify the force whose vigour went
In furnishing of yore that strong defence,
And spent itself therein; the thing so spent
Is dogma through negation, its pretence
Is apostolic doctrine proved by common sense.

From what?—From Holy Scripture, which is made
The sponsor of each differing divine,
Who holds his cure, yet wishes to evade
The Laws of the protesting Thirty-nine?
But common sense proves many things therefrom,
Outside the articles—however strained;
All sects within the range of Christendom
How different soe'er, have thence obtained
Through so-called common sense the tenets they
maintained.

Conviction pauses, and when Thought comes in
To fill the vacant space, must soon begin
To waver ominously: but the Truth
Sounds harshly in the ears of modern youth,
And Charity now means Free trade in Error
Duly protected from the name by Terror.
What can we therefore say without offence?
Truly if in this manner we commence
The answer will be like to hover in suspense.

And certainly this question is unfit
For lay discussion; therefore let us give
The much appreciated benefit
Of doubt where it belongs; for sensitive
As zoophytes, or proud-flesh in a wound,
Are views and viewy dogmatism, though
Their advocates have, more or less, lampooned
And slandered that to which as yet they owe
Their own immunity from threatened overthrow.

Again the question changes, yet no more
Befits a layman's answer than before,
What of the men, who on a crookèd course
Have carried on the Causes from their source?
The former are beyond the passion-ground
Of alterable things; but these resound
With spiritual arms of later date,
And present voice of actual debate.
What sounds are these indeed which thence reverberate?

In what degree responsible are these,
Who stand about the door-sill of the Church,
And enter not, but scatter calumnies
That vanish at the touch of fair research?
Some stand where they were placed, and many more
Press closer to the door-sill, some deny
The inference of such proximity,
And some draw back, with purpose to explore,
While many fear to change who gladly would restore.

And now again I fain would turn mine eyes
On England, as she was, when Faith was one,
And mark through intervening centuries
How much has been produced, how much undone.
The light of those "*dark ages*" burns not clear,
For prejudice doth veil it, yet it throws
Its beams on after times, both far and near,
In moonlight patches brokenly, and shows
How much thereto the best of England's glory owes.

But not alone from works of by-gone days,
Or living facts, does earnestness upraise
The question which on many a conscience weighs.
Fresh-growing wants now starting into sight,
Like stars when evening yields her place to night,
Will help true hearts their bearing to descry
And bring to light full many a calumny.
The time is coming onward that will show
What principles they are which Time may not
o'erthrow.

Along the great highway of human life
We find some shady spots in wider space,
Whereon the marks of human toil are rife,
In works that human toil doth not efface;
But they whose deeds on Time thus take their stand,
On Time have carefully engraved their work:
Half-purposed thoughts are traced on shifting sand,
And change or dissolution surely lurk
Where toiling man is found his true intents to shirk.

"The world knows nothing of its greatest men,"
And worse than nothing of its greatest movements,
These being wide in scope, beyond their ken
Who only seek material improvements.
Worse—worse than nothing do they know of these,
For truth appears to them through broken glass,
And honest men, with brains and sympathies,
Oft sneer at names that honesty should class
With such as in true fame more favoured names o'erpass.

The world knows nothing of their minds who left
All hopes that most with human minds prevail
For Faith of which mankind had been bereft,
Nay, cheated out of, cheated in detail.
I speak not now of Laymen, though indeed
They also sacrificed things very dear
To British hearts—I speak of those who turned
Away from every human joy, to plead
In prayer for ignorance that proudly spurned
Their office and themselves with angry eyes down turned.

A web of vague suspicion and disdain—
A spider web, that breaks yet clings again,
Doth round their names a wily force retain;
And many an English mind, now growing free
To pause, and think, and doubt such honesty,
Still sees not in those witness-lives as yet
The truth they register, but with regret,

And kindly wishes, and a misty hope
Of unity in Faith without the Pope,
Examines Faith within a broken microscope.

Let him who thinks their life is a mistake,
And they averse to "Truth for its own sake,"
Let him endeavour, only for one day,
To train his will, be humble and obey,
In short, once only to himself apply
The test of such a life ideally—
Not e'en in practice—then, amid the strife
Of angry impotence, attempt to live that life.

The world misconstrues, or misreads their minds,
And misconceives their actions.—Patience yet,
The scroll of daily evidence unwinds,
But in a long estrangèd tongue, beset
With false deductions, which are still believed
By those who would be true in Faith and action,
E'en as they are in things by them received

As facts—But mid the hum of fierce detraction,
Hear ye no undertone of steady counteraction?

Yes! Undertones increasing, as the breeze
That ripples o'er the willow-shaded stream,
Then turns the windmill, bends the trunks of trees,
And bears huge vessels to the world's extreme—
Such now are audible: as yet their sound
Acts only in those avenues of Thought
That feed the nation's mind; but these abound
And grow—meanwhile a change is being wrought
In these our days, a change with Heaven's Mercy fraught.

LINES ON THE RUINS OF A MANOR HOUSE.

On yonder shadowed wall
Dim life-scenes, past and possible—some new,
Some old as human nature, cross my view
While twilight's veil doth fall.

Within the solitude
That holds possession here—while bats flit by,
But stay not, Fancy conjures to the eye
What others may have viewed.

Within these roofless walls
Rise up before Imagination's eye
Some pages of the Nation's history,
Obscured at intervals—

Obscured concerning Facts
And mingled motives, to be judged or guessed
Where men (we're told) have acted for the best,
And time has fixed their acts.

Through selfish deeds well done,
With strength that hero-worshippers applaud,
Perchance the owners of these acres broad
Have high position won,

And lost it by neglect
Of duty such as benefits the doer—
Such as the man who would be fortune's wooer
Loves through his self-respect;

Or on the flowing course
Of *quasi* vicious pleasure, conscience-free,
Or owing to self-careless chivalry
That crossed the ruling Force.

Contemporaries here
Have thought and spoken of the nation's movements,
Grieved at their turns, or hailed them as improvements,
Deeming themselves sincere,

And being so in fact—
Some thoroughly, some bounded by the range
Of notions aping thoughts by means of change
And conscience inexact.

Contemporaries gazed
On Beauty here, whose peeling portraits lie
In broker's rooms, before the careless eye
Of wonder feebly raised.

Contemporaries met,
And loved that loveliness, and, loving, grew
Towards Good or Ill; for oft on passion true
Youth's turning point is set.

These lands have long been bought—
Some by a large proprietor remote,
Some by an unknown stranger—for a vote;
But neither there resort.

Much money there is spent,
Farm-buildings have been built, the wells are pure,
The paupers few—the drains are made secure,
Through help and management.

But, even as elsewhere
In England's throughly cultivated land,
Some symptoms of non-residence expand
Before perception there.

I see them in the fence
Of growing Facts around their chequered fame
Who lived here once—their memory can claim
The Fact of residence.

I see them in the line
Of undesired sequences that rise
High from their masked Beginning, which men prize
As 'twere a thing divine.

And which of us shall place
Men's lives and motives between sharp-ruled lines?
The doer of some good some good designs—
Though hard it be to trace.

I turn me from these walls:
The Bats are fewer, and I see them not;
Their rushing wings disturb this lonely spot
At wider intervals.

And as I turn away,
The moon uprises slowly through the trees;
The distant view grows clearer by degrees,
In freshening harmony.

ON THE ISLE OF PURBECK.

Great landmarks here are wound through little
space
Half circled by the sea,
Mid such tranquillity
As most in scenes most pastoral doth hold its place.

A double range of hills, as with a fence
Of nature's own device,
With one sole orifice
Shuts in the sloping valley's half circumference.

Pastures are large and sloping down the vale,
In undulations green,
With winding lanes between,
And high upon the cliff that fronts the southern gale.

Wild heath, outstretching far behind the lines
Of semi-circling hills,
A wide expanse fulfils,
And with the deep blue distance distantly combines.

Small bays between brown cliffs, bays blue and clear,
Homesteads in meadows green,
With many gates between,
And hanging woods in shade, their varied forms uprear.

Within the arc of hills a soft repose,
As if from by-gone days,
Enslaves the sympathies,
And unto local love affection doth dispose.

GUIDANCE.

To the Very Rev. Dr. Newman.

The man who shows a wanderer his way,
Once lost through half-remembered misdirection,
Holds, through the length and breadth of memory,
A mortgage on that wanderer's affection.
Such, in the matters of this life, we view
As Fact indisputable, more or less,
But do we measure well how much is due
To him who guides a soul in its distress?

But what is due to guidance of such kind
Lies not upon the surface—'tis indeed
A thing deep-rooted in the conscious mind
That once has felt, and grappled with its need.

My own experience has truly been
To feel such want of spiritual rest,
And struggle with a need obscurely seen,
Half-recognized, resistless, unexpressed.

Until the need I struggled with had grown
Immeasurably vast; and then I waited,
E'en as a child that wanders forth alone,
And pauses oft, yet fears to be belated.

Often I paused and longer by degrees,
Till intermediate movement there was none
Of spiritual Thought; but harmonies
Were heard within my soul, and one by one

Spread further towards completion: then at length,
But not at once, I consciously became
Fulfilled with their completeness, while new strength
And preter-human fixed my trembling aim.

The mighty Truth which forced my mind's assent,
Including all the avenues to Thought
Made equal way with the development
Of what is best within me:—I was "caught"
By no one—Priest nor layman, nor indeed
By book or argument; but, by a force
That grasped my total mind, my total need
Was made my total answer in due course.
Of this I speak unwillingly—ashamed
That one, so meritless and pigmy-sized
Should with the good and great be thus self-named
As if with such he were self-scrutinized
Comparatively; but I feel compelled,
By my submission, to confess this fact,
For Truth exclusive and unparalleled
Alone could thus on human credence act.
Persuasion, creeping through a human mind,
Has several sub-agents, but conviction
Mans the approaches, and of every kind
Assimilates its thought without restriction.

Therefore all ways of Thought at length converged
In one conclusion, after they were free
From "Anything but that"—the plea most urged
In favour of the great apostasy.
But though mere liberty of human Thought
(Not lawlessness directed) steered my course
Through reverence, my state of mind was taught,
Or, rather cleared for teaching, at the source:
Its breathing-pores were cleared, an atmosphere
Unknown and pure passed through them, a new power
Grew out of nothing, as new growths appear
In meadows watered by the first Spring-shower.
Mercy divine, o'erruling misconception,
Opened my heart to wish—my soul to hope,
And Faith through Love passed into my perception,
Giving thereto a gently widening scope,

Conditionally aiding—predisposing,
Rather than giving promise; and my mind
Inhaled their fragrance by degrees, reposing
Long o'er the Truth it yet had not defined.
But words are incomplete: I was in thought
Where heretofore by instinct I had tended,
Struggling against the guidance that I sought,
Until conflicting evidence was blended—
Aye! and conflicting duties, which had seemed
For years inevitably so, entailing
Wrong as inevitably, till the day-star gleamed
And right conviction made its way, prevailing.
Whence did that day-star gleam through broken clouds,
When, compassless as yet, I sought my way
In deepening twilight, such as partly shrouds,
But more confuses, what we so survey?
Not out of written controversial works,
For such I scarce had seen, nor from effect

Of such in social intercourse, (there lurks
Beneath these words no meaning indirect,
Nor "mental reservation") but in acts,
That told of doctrines openly misstated
Slowly I read some controversial Facts,
And these were slowly into Truth translated.
'Twas in misstatement, then, I found that light
Through broken clouds, and therefore sought my way
To what *might* be, till out of waning night
Shone forth the spiritual dawn of day.
What was that clouded Day-star? It was Fact,
Of Faith and practice, gleaming through the veil
Of calumny, till o'er my total tract
Of thought, the daylight did at length prevail.

I cannot name exclusively a cause
Why towards that gleam of light I turned mine eyes:
I first was slowly conscious of a pause
In questioning, and then of slow surprise.

But could I seek much light, and yet ignore
The evidence around me, far and near,
Which utters, mid the contradictive roar
Of rival sects, a sound both firm and clear?

Thou wert that evidence's voice—or, rather
Guide and Translator for thy native land,
Who, e'en while seeking yet, didst, as a father,
Stretch forth to errant minds a helping hand.

I knew thee not, and yet thou wert a fence
To ripening faith: thy plainly guided life
Was unto me a silent influence—
A fixèd Fact—where questionings were rife.

So, like a wandering child, whom perfume pure,
Of some distinguishable flower shows
His homeward path, and onward doth allure
Where Landmarks freshly open as he goes,

The odour of thy life did permeate
My soul's perceptions, ere its thoughts were free;
And therefore unto thee I dedicate
This humble tribute-verse of memory.

TO A WIFE.

NOT DEDICATED TO "STRONG-MINDED WOMEN."

Once have I seen, united in one mind,
(But once, if memory doth serve me,) growing
Smoothly perfectionward, self-disciplined,
And, year by year, more combination showing,

Powers both male and female, from the Source
Where they appear to meet, and not where this
Runs parallel to that—not where their force
Compared, produces sharp antithesis.

Once only have I found such combination;
Elsewhere it may exist—I have not seen it:
Elsewhere I've only found exaggeration—
Contrast sharp cut, with vacancy between it.

Vigour and sentient grace are in that mind,
Firmness of purpose and consent of heart,
Clear force of thought, by female tact refined,
Strong common sense and fantasy of art.

Blent at one point harmoniously, these
Branch gently off, till separately viewed,
They show some even-edged antitheses,
And beauteous freshness constantly renewed.

A woman, e'en distinctively, is she—
Nay, insomuch that nature doth refine
The vigour of her mind in harmony
With what is in her heart most feminine.

Her constant presence constantly doth bless
With joy and hope my daily way of life.
Laugh, an' thou wilt, that this I here confess;
I can afford to bear it—she's my wife.

A DIALOGUE ON EGOTISM BETWEEN A. B. AND C.

A.

'Tis commonly propounded, and
Accepted fully through the Land,
That they who of themselves do write
The charge of impudence invite.
But have the Public well reflected—
Have they this matter well inspected?
Surely 'tis cooler far in me to guess
Another's fancies—than mine own confess.

B.

Thus stated it may be so; But
Methinks you're driving through a rut
Which, though 'tis in the road's width, yet,
If followed far, will e'en upset

Your argument—it wont go deep
Without upsetting in a heap.
Now, which of these two actions is most rude—
To cram another with one's notions crude,
Or flattered portraits civilly obtrude?

C.

But will it not be better, if
From pipe of peace we take a whiff,
And recognize with true intent
This patent fact self-evident:
That in well-mingled colours lie
The makings of true harmony?
Self-knowledge must be learned before we know man-
Kind, or else we treat it as a foeman:
He who acts otherwise is but a paltry showman.

Golden hair—not streaked with dust of gold,
Against the harmony of nature, sold—
Nor otherwise, through strangely turned ambition,
Tinged with an imitative composition;
Features whose form was pleasant to the eye,
And left their impress on the memory,
Eyes whose expression rested on the eyes
And roused the heart's unselfish sympathies;
Grace of the heart, of movement, and of mind
That could not be mistaken nor defined;
Such—but these words are cold and incomplete
Of one whose counterpart in fact we seldom meet.
For words have boundaries of meaning—sounds
Their limits of conjecture, Time surrounds
The utmost of Man's life, man's dual nature
Passes the utmost range of nomenclature.

Beauty of form and feature, soul and mind,
Were in that bride reposefully combined:
One felt her beauty, but was not surprised:
The bridegroom had done well—not enterprized
Possessional distinction.

.....He was grave
With thinking of his happiness; he gave
His heart's attention totally to her,
Yet silence often was interpreter.
Sometimes they spoke with trembling utterance
The utmost of their wish—continuance;
But in their bliss of mutual possession
Each was complete, and needed no profession.

Moonlight was resting on the silent lake,
The skiffs left silvery shadows on their wake,
No breath of wind the stillness then did break:
The air was breathed unnoticed, and the
stillness
Did but assure their late o'er-anxious hearts,
As, in the convalescent hours of illness

Absence of sound a sense of rest imparts.
The mountain was in shade.
"See'st thou 'tis so?"
The raptured bridegroom whispered to his bride—
She, echoing that thought in accents low,
Who stood upon life's threshold by his side.
"Deep and translucent as the lake's expanse,
Mysterious as yonder shadowed hill
Is life to me this day—a consonance
Of rest and ecstasy. These hours fulfil
The largest earthly hopes that baffle human will."

ON THE MEASURE AND MARK OF EARTHLY HAPPINESS.

Through life, anxiety and bliss—
When such are truly felt,
Approach us in antithesis,
And then together melt.

They melt and form harmonious dreams,
That fade and come again,
Like Spring-day sun, whose joyous beams
Return not to remain.

When first in unity of Scope
Two human hearts are blended,
Tremors and ecstasies of Hope
Keep happiness suspended.

When, through fruition's constant fact
Fear loses half its rigour,
Hope doth its altered force attract,
And gains thereby more vigour.

Then is the dual Heart fulfilled
With steadiness of joy:
That which at first through tremors thrilled
Rests now without alloy.

But, ever and anon, the two
Resolve to their components:
Bliss falling back to distant view,
While Fear finds fresh exponents.

Then do they blend, but they resolve
Repeatedly again:
They are not day-dreams that dissolve,
But bliss with throes of pain.

Such is the way of life, where joy
Is found in largest share,
With most content and least alloy
Of worry's wear and tear.

For here we rest not, but are hastened
Through a transition life:
Completeness here by change is chastened,
Peace feels the sting of strife.

We bear our treasure, resting not,
Though halting on the road:
On earth there is no resting-spot—
It is not our abode.

But, in the depth of human joy
And height of aspiration,
Trace we that bliss without alloy
Which hovers o'er probation.

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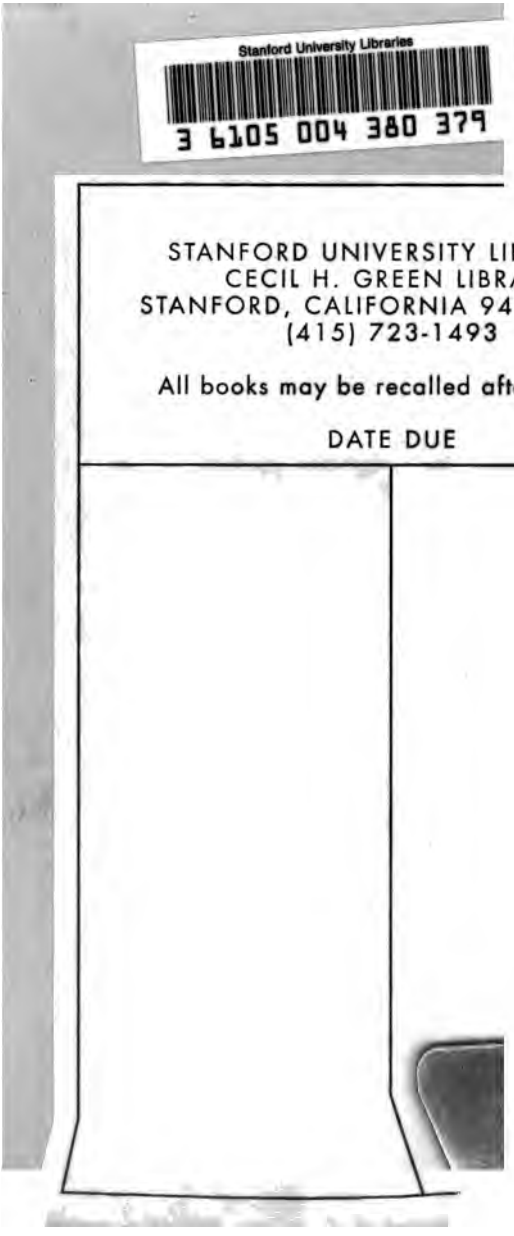
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